



ISSUE 51

AUTUMN 1998

Research, or Ignorance is Not Bliss

Susan M. Garrett

No matter what your background, no matter what kind of submission you make, you should be ready to do research. Artists might need anatomy studies or reference photos of faces or backgrounds, writers might need facts about eighteenth century dress or 20th century weaponry, poets might need to know what *flamboyant* really means or how many lines are contained in a sonnet ... but *everybody* needs to do research at one point or another and few seem to know where the references materials are.

Why should I do research? This isn't like I'm getting graded on this or anything...

Oh, foolish, foolish mortal! You do research for two reasons — accuracy and self-protection. If someone is reading your story or poem, or looking at your artwork, you can assume that they're interested in the subject and either know something about it or are interested in learning about it. If you make mistakes in the work and the reader knows

something about the subject, they may lose respect for your work or even lose interest. If the reader wants to learn more about the subject and trusts you to give them correct information, then you fake everything, the reader will feel betrayed and will be highly unlikely to read your material again. By blatantly flaunting your ignorance, you send a clear message to your reader that you don't care and expect them not to care either. And that's assuming you make it into print in the first place. There's nothing more annoying to an editor than getting a story that obviously hasn't been researched. Why should she give consideration to printing a story when the author doesn't care enough to attempt to get a few facts straight? Don't expect your editor to do your job!

Self-protection occurs both in professional as well as amateur work. For example, a writer in *Writer's Magazine* once complained that he had been done in by an editor. In

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one of his espionage novels, he described an airport in which two Japanese men were quietly discussing business. The copy editor, a recent graduate student, decided that his writing wasn't colorful enough, so she added a number of descriptive phrases, among which was describing the conversation of the Japanese businessmen as being in the tone of "the land of the midnight sun." In one fell swoop, the graduate student had the businessmen speaking Norwegian instead of Japanese! (*The land of the midnight sun* is Norway, the *land of the rising sun* is Japan.) Luckily, the author saw the galleys and brought it to the attention of the publisher, who profusely apologized, but it was a near miss. And the error would have been picked up by a good number of people who all would have blamed the author for being such an idiot and the editor for not catching the mistake!

Mistakes happen, but protect yourself and your reader by doing a little research.

Where do I go first to research something?

That all depends on what you're researching. Most times, the library has more than enough material to answer your questions, as well as a librarian to point you in the right direction. The greatest favor you can do yourself, if you haven't done so already, is to learn your way around the card catalogue, the periodicals room (*Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* is invaluable), and the reference room — there are hundreds of indices to publications and books, bibliographies, etc.

If you're an artist in search of references, you'll find that it helps to think laterally. For example, you have to illustrate a story that takes place during Mardi Gras, and want to capture some of the atmosphere in your artwork. You say your library doesn't carry a copy of *The Great Big Color Coffee Table Book of Neat Mardi Gras Photos*? Try related subjects, like travel guides to Louisiana, or back issues of photo magazines like *Life*, or travel magazines. Ask your travel agent if he or she has any brochures on Mardi Gras trips. You get the idea.

It's also a good idea to remember that when you're working in a specific style (Art Nouveau? Art Deco?) or period (Edwardian? Egyptian?), that it's best to go to primary sources for inspiration whenever possible. For example, if you want to do something in Art Nouveau style, don't work from some recent magazine artist's diluted interpretation of someone else's imitation of the real thing. Find yourself some of the original stuff and use that as your springboard.

The following is a *brief* list of places to go for answers to a few technical questions.

anatomy— If you want to know what damage can be sustained by the human body and what the results are, check into a text on anatomy, a medical dictionary, etc. Talking to doctors and nurses isn't a bad idea, either, especially if you preface the conversation by stating that you are a writer or

artist working on material and you are doing research (you don't want a doctor to think you have sinister reason for knowing exactly how big a hole a .38 snub nosed revolver makes, now do you?). Most importantly, be courteous when dealing with these people. They are professionals and busy professionals at that, do not take up much of their time, inquire before you ask questions, and if one doctor or nurse proves too busy, ask if they can recommend someone who can help you.

Artists looking into anatomy references need go no further than local library. The photography and art section should have a few books on photographs made of people in various positions and poses just for this purpose (e.g., *The Human Figure* by Erik A. Ruby. Or check out Eadweard Muybridge's motion studies for shots of people and animals going through their paces. There are also many books designed to teach artists how to draw various bits of the body and how they all fit together. If you like to work from life, just look around ... there should be people at the library. Make sketches of how people sit or stand or move, or ask someone you know to pose for you. It works, really.

costume — There are many books on historic costume, though the further back in time you go the more gaps in specific knowledge appear. ("No, we don't know what they wore for underwear. Why do you need to know?") If you know someone who's a costumer, they can probably help a lot. The local SCA group can work wonders if you're dealing with their timeframe. Clothing within the last century or so is a cinch — check out the many available catalogue reprints, periodicals of the time, paper doll books, or even art books — what can give you a better idea of what people wore than a painting of the period?

disabilities — If you're writing about a person with a disability (even a temporary one — "A.J.'s blind, Mom! He's *blind!*"), you owe it to yourself and your audience to be a lot more accurate than the shows and movies we love generally are. Fortunately, this isn't all that difficult (check out *Disability Drama in Television and Film* by Lauri Klobas for some prime examples of what's been done wrong — and right — in the past), though there are many aspects to consider, both technical (how does A.J. keep his different-colored polo shirts straight until the bandages come off?) and in your writing itself. Avoiding cliché characters and archaic terminology (someone's only "wheelchair bound" if they've been chained to it and gagged) is a must. If you don't know someone in your life that you can consult, there are many periodicals dealing with disability-related topics ranging from medical journals to local newsletters — *Disability Rag* is a good starting source for a fan writer. Outside the library, try your local Developmental Disabilities Counsel, Hotline for the Handicapped, Easter Seals Society, or other applicable organization or service — they may have a reference library you can use, or even provide you with booklets on writing about people with

disabilities (e.g. *Portraying People with Disabilities in the Media or People First*). They can also point you in the right direction for doing more specific research.

drugs and/or illness — A trip to the drugstore is in order, along with the same stipulation about talking to doctors and/or any other professional — be polite, tell them what you are doing and ask for assistance. Most medical professionals can help you with describing the effects of certain drugs and there are now some handy paperbacks on the market about both prescription and non-prescription dosages, side-effects, etc. *The Physician's Desk Reference* (PDR) is also handy in this regard, as well as for listing the symptoms and treatment of various illnesses, and should be available in most libraries.

If you're looking specifically for poisons or historical information, there are a number of historical medical books that can assist you, including books on plant folklore and herbs. Also consider looking into books on historical crimes.

espionage — Believe it or not, books do exist that do nothing but trace the histories of espionage agencies, going into great detail about how agencies operate, terminology, and who should be afraid of whom and why. Pay special attention to any reference section, as well as the biography section (many a well-known or unknown spy has published a memoir), and be prepared to breeze through a few espionage novels for atmosphere and a feel for dirty tricks.

geography and/or traveling — Small problems such as how long a flight takes from X to Y can be handled by a quick call to your travel agent. Larger problems such as what the people wear, what language they speak, and how they feel about certain things involves a bit more research. Thankfully, most countries have tourist bureaus which are more than happy to send you pamphlets and brochures and answer questions. If you're interested in the historical aspect, mention it, but also keep an eye out for museums, travel guides, and epic films.

historical characters — If you're writing about a real person from history in a fictional context, it's not unlikely that you'll need to play fast and loose with a few aspects of that person's life. That's acceptable if it's nothing too outrageous. But make sure that you know the facts before you start fictionalizing. Biographies are best to start, of course, but don't forget histories of the period in question, contemporary magazines, etc. Primary source material is always helpful — try to find out if your subject has any letters published, voice recordings available, or appears on film anywhere. If the person is related to your local area, a trip to the historical society will yield results.

law — It is possible to understand the law without being a lawyer, although you might want to speak to one for safety's sake. For technical terms, refer to a law dictionary, for minor court procedures go to one of the current paperback "law for the layman" books on the shelves (which

describes everything from small claims court to juvenile status to criminal prosecution). Also be prepared to delve into the rules and regulations of other agencies, such as insurance companies, unions, etc., if it becomes appropriate.

paranormal — If you're interested in the real stuff, there are a number of organizations around that deal with everything from ghosts to UFOs to Bigfoot. Check your local library magazines section, as well as the section on paranormal and/or religious material and you'll probably find what you need. The reference section should hold at least one encyclopedia on the supernatural. If you're after information on monsters and magic, you'll want to check out the classic literary works and the commentary on them, along with the mythology/folklore/religion section of your library. One caveat — one person's folklore is often another person's religion, and as such must be treated with respect. For example, don't give a totem pole to a Native American tribe that doesn't use them, or try to fake your way through a ritual that may or may not exist simply for the convenience of your story. It's ... well, it's a damn stupid thing to do.

police procedure — Depending on the time period and the country you're dealing with, police procedure could involve the intricacies of Miranda rights or a nightstick to the skull. Modern police procedures can be discussed with police officers or looked up in manuals. Foreign police procedure is a bit trickier, but even foreign governments have police manuals and/or people to talk to. Check out the plethora of non-fiction books concerning various types of police investigation and they may very well straighten out some of your problems.

sex — Yes, you already know all about it. But breaking a leg — even breaking it five or six times a week — doesn't necessarily make you a bone specialist. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many "adult" stories featuring bizarre technical blunders, physical impossibilities, or scenes where the author glosses over crucial moments because he or she obviously has no idea what's actually taking place. Reading other people's adult stories isn't the best way to go about researching the stuff — for example, if you're a young heterosexual female who writes slash, what do you think happens when you get your facts from stories written by other young heterosexual females who in turn got their information from ... you get the picture. The library — or bookstore if you live in a town where what goes on the library shelves is kept under control "for your own good" — is the place to go. (Caveat: avoid out and out pornography, which isn't usually at home to Mr. Realism — you've got plenty of imagination of your own, right? — and faddy stuff like *The G-Spot Coloring Book* or *The Women's Astrological Sex and Cooking Journal — A Book of Days*).

sports and hobbies — If you need to know something about golf, check out the golf pro at a local country club. The same goes for most sports — swimmers know about swimming, baseball fans seem to remember entire team

rosters for years, and Olympic fans can tell you who won what medal when. Most of this information can also be found in books and encyclopedias, but a person might give you a bit more feel for the topic than a book will.

technical— Need to know how an automobile engine works, what the latest development is in laser optics, or how many tiles cover a space shuttle? Check scientific magazines and the hard science section of the library. You'd be surprised at the information available to you from various people — car mechanics, AT&T, and NASA are more than willing to answer questions than you'd think they'd be.

Conclusion

Reference materials may include dictionaries, encyclopedias, biographies, histories, fiction (mystery, espionage, science fiction, fantasy, etc.), magazine or

newspaper clippings, documentaries, movies, museum and travel guides, and may involve interviews with medical professionals, lawyers, travel agents, mechanics, sports pros or fans, teachers, students, government agencies, embassies, travel bureaus, etc. This isn't to say that you'll need to speak with every one of these people or have to consult every one of those types of books when you do research — what you do will depend upon the amount of information you need and how you plan to use it. Facts, figures, and quirky details are best found in books, but only someone who's been in Barcelona in the summer can tell you about the heat, or someone who works for or with abused women can begin to tell you about the frustrations and lack of legal options. Be willing to talk to people and do a little research and your work will improve dramatically.

The Day I met Gary Kurtz

Gerald Crotty

On the 14th of June 1998, I went to Empire Day IX in Cheshunt, England. Empire Day is a one day SW event. There are usually 6-8 guests from the films, a dealer's room, props display, video room, etc. There's a Q&A session, autograph signing, craft competition, and auction.

I'd been to the first few Empire Days and met Jeremy Bulloch, Dave Prowse, Michael Sheard, Warwick Davis, Caroline Blakiston, Kenny Baker, Peter Diamond, Declan Mulholland, etc. But by the 6th one, it was mostly the same guests turning up again and again, so I'd given the last few events a miss. After all, how many times do I need to hear Dave Prowse say, "They should have used my voice"?

So, why did I decide to go to IX? Simple: Gary Kurtz was going. Yes, Gary Kurtz. Yes, the producer of SW and TESB.

Actually, he had turned up at another con the previous year, so I knew it wasn't mad fantasy on the organizer's part.

So I went down to the venue. We looked at the props and the junk in the dealer's room which I can't afford and then we sat down for the Q&A. Now my friends know I'm a Kurtz fan 'cos I'm always complaining about how Lucasfilm ignores his contributions.

So, come 12 noon and the guests are introduced and brought on stage for the Q&A. They introduce Shelagh

Fraser, Warwick Davis, Declan Mulholland, Stuart and Kay Freeborn, Kenny Baker, and Gary Kurtz. He looks a little older, his hair is thinning but in good health. It's his composure that's the most obvious thing. He's got this zen-like quality about him.

I asked him what he thought about the Special Editions. He said he didn't really agree with them, that the CGI Jabba was mainly a gimmick to get publicity and that they knew the scene was redundant back in 1977 which is why Greedo was given the plot exposition Jabba would have given. He also said he didn't like the way some of the re-editing messed up the music cues and rhythm. He also talked about how a film is of its time and how filmmakers do their best but there comes a point when the film has to be finished and left alone.

However, he did add that the best thing to come out of it all is that the films are in the theaters again where they should be seen.

I also asked him about the Greedo scene. George Lucas had said that Greedo was always meant to shoot first. Kurtz was baffled by this. He said Han was always meant to shoot first and the new scene is confusing. He couldn't remember any intention by Lucas in 1977 to have Greedo shoot first.

An audience member asked the panel what their favorite



Gary Kurtz and Gerald Crotty

SW scene was. Kurtz said he didn't have a particular favorite scene but he remembered when he saw the scene where Luke says "I'm not afraid" and Yoda says "You will be ... you will be!" He said that that scene proved Yoda worked as a dramatic character, something they'd really worried about. (Is this guy smart or what?)

After the Q&A, there was a signing session. Now I don't usually bother with these things. I'm just not really interested in standing in line for an autograph. But I decided to get Kurtz' if only because it would afford me the opportunity of asking him another question or two.

While I was in the queue, a guy asked me who he was! I couldn't believe it. I felt like saying, "He's Gary Kurtz,

the producer, you @\$% moron!" but instead I just politely answered him. And then I looked across at the queue for Warwick Davis and noticed it was 5 times as long. I couldn't help feeling some contempt for those types of fans who know how much a Yak Face is worth and get all excited about having their copy of "Battle for Endor" signed, but don't know who Gary Kurtz is. Hell, some of them think Rick McCallum produced SW!

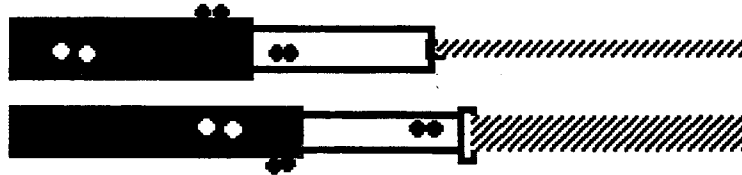
So, I got his autograph and I asked him an awkward question — why hadn't we seen him on TV during all the publicity for the Special Editions? He said that he was out of the country at the time. He paused and then told me that he didn't get on very well with Lucasfilm at the moment. But he added quickly that he got on okay with George, just not Lucasfilm.

I also asked him if he was still working on movies and he said he had several projects on the go. And then I asked if I could have my picture taken with him. I'm just a geek like everyone else!

The thing about Gary Kurtz is that he's so polite and honest, if I were him, I'd be rather bitter about not receiving the recognition and rewards he undoubtedly deserves. But there isn't a trace of any resentment about him, and he always answers questions truthfully. He doesn't try and represent anyone but himself. He's also clearly very intelligent but without any egotism.

Very un-Hollywood.

I have to say it — he's the Jedi Master.



Editor and Publisher:
Cheree T. Cargill
114 Villanova Circle
Forney, Texas 75126 USA

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Deadline for #52 — February 1, 1999. *Submissions received later than seven (7) days after deadline will not be published in the current issue.*

BALLANTINE EXPLORES A NEW GALAXY WITH WORLD ENGLISH RIGHTS TO A COMPREHENSIVE STAR WARS

New Agreement Consolidates Current Star Wars Book Properties With New Publications Tied to Next 3 Star Wars Films

NEW YORK, Oct. 15 /PRNewswire/ -- The Ballantine Publishing Group has just acquired rights to a sweeping program of future Star Wars fiction and nonfiction titles, it was announced today by Linda Grey, President of the Group. Ballantine, a division of Random House Inc., the world's largest English-language general trade book publisher has been publishing the best selling novelizations of the first three Star Wars films for over 20 years.

"Star Wars has become the most successful franchise in the entertainment industry," said Ms. Grey, "and we're excited to have an opportunity to play such a key role in the publishing that will accompany the new Star Wars movies. Along with our bestselling Star Wars backlist, publishing all of the new adult fiction and nonfiction well into the next millennium will introduce the magic of Star Wars to a whole new generation of readers."

"We're delighted to bring our complete Star Wars adult publishing program under one roof said Howard Roffman, Vice President of Licensing for Lucasfilm, Ltd. "It will create an unprecedented opportunity for a coordinated program that will take Star Wars publishing to its highest level and bring exciting new books to our fans the world over."

The first of the three new Star Wars films has just completed the first phase of principal photography and is expected to be released in May 1999.

Under the new licensing agreement, Ballantine, through its Del Rey imprint, will publish novelizations of the three new Star Wars films, which are prequels to the original Star Wars Trilogy, Star Wars: A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi. In addition, they will publish all the nonfiction books based on the new trilogy of films, and spin-off novels set in the periods of both the classic films and the new prequel trilogy. . . .

Ballantine's sister Random House Inc. companies abroad will publish the three new Star Wars novelizations, the classic Star Wars spin-off novels, and new novels relating to the upcoming films throughout the English-speaking world. The companies include Random House UK, Random House Australia, Random House New Zealand, Random House South Africa, and in Canada, Ballantine Books. The Star Wars fiction will also be available throughout the English-speaking world in audio format from Random House Audio Publishing.

The nonfiction Star Wars projects, including illustrated and art books, guides to the various aspects of the Star Wars universe, illustrated scripts and other informative and entertaining companions to the Star Wars experience will be published by Ballantine in the United States and Canada.

A NOTE FROM PAT GRANT

I'm planning to do up a special ad section to be ready by next May. Anyone who is interested can send me an ad listing that is 2-1/2" wide and 2" tall in size, along with a reduced clear copy of a cover from your most recent publication (zine, newsletter, letterzine...) to go with it. Most publications put artwork on the cover and artwork sells! Again, either send a clear *reduced* copy (must fit in the 2-1/2" x 2" size area with your text!), or send it scanned onto MacIntosh disk as a .TIF file. You may send in an ad for each publication you want listed. Clubs and Services are also welcome to submit same size ads. NOTE: This will be free advertising to you!!! All we ask in return is equal space in your publication if you offer advertising space. Also ... I'd like you to send me a short "bio" on your organization. This would include such things as when you started, how big is your membership, what publications you produce, and anything else you can think of. I plan to start doing a "spotlight" page each issue on one of our advertisers. This, of course, would be free advertising. Send your ads to:

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And let me know if you'd like a master copy of this ad spread to include in your next publication after May 1999.

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THE MOONS OF YAVIN has been running in the U.K. since 1984 and produced two club-related magazines, *Telesponder*, which is packed full of club info, SW news, and views and some of the best artwork around, and *Galaxy Travellers*, which includes SW fiction, both from the club members and other SW fans. The Moons of Yavin is for the active fan, for those whose views, artwork, reviews and fandom express their love for their interest in SW. The Moons of Yavin also caters to the younger SW fan, with its own Junior Section. For more details on the club, write to:

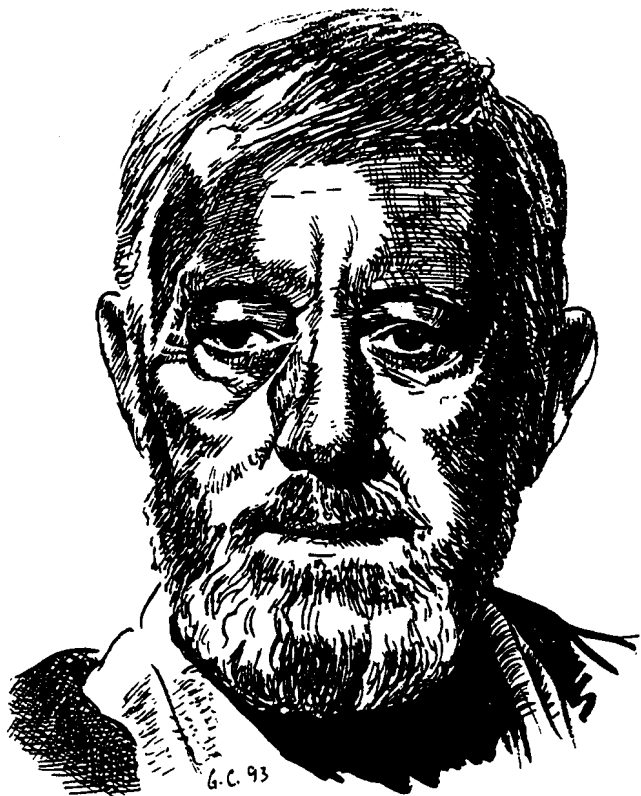
Jamie Spracklen
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UPCOMING CONVENTION INFO...

Mark down March 27-28, 1999, if you're within travelling distance of Dallas for the Plano SciFi Expo and Toy Show (Plano is a suburb of Dallas). Guest stars will be Jeri "Seven of Nine" Ryan and Jonathan "Hugh Borg" de Arco. Special guest is scheduled to be Billy Dee Williams (contract pending but expected to be returned any day now).

And if you're not going to make MediaWest next year and/or are able to make it to Dallas May 21-23, don't miss the next Plano SciFi Expo and Toy Show. Because of the new SW movie opening that week, this one will be a SW blowout with the following guest stars — Dave Prowse, Peter Mayhew, Jeremy Bullock, Warwick Davis and a host of other SW guests!

Randy and I will be have a booth at both shows! Come see us! Then we'll see you at MWC the next weekend!!!
Star Wars Rules!!!



SINCERE SYMPATHY TO ...

Wanda Lybarger who lost her mother in early November.

Wanda expresses her thanks to everyone who sent cards, letters, flowers or phone calls. She will answer as many as possible but is unable to answer all of them. She does want everyone to know that she truly appreciates the outpouring of love and care that her friends in fandom have sent her way.

SOUTHERN ENCLAVE MEMBER PROFILES...

Name: Tina Inge Bentrup
Address: 5325 Browns Gap Road
Knoxville, TN 37918
Phone: (423) 922-5862
Occupation: Library Specialist (Interlibrary Loan)
Education: B.A. (English), Univ. of Tennessee
Personal: Married since 1974 to Dan Bentrup; no children besides the 2 of us!
Years in Fandom: Since 1988, but saw SW in 1977
Fannish Activities: *Southern Enclave*, MediaWest since 1991, contributor to *A Tremor in the Force* (stories and cartoons)
Fannish Activities besides SW: Gilbert & Sullivan fan since 1950's!
Interests Outside Fandom: Choral singing, playing recorder, hiking in the Smoky Mountains, playing ping-pong, writing, drawing cartoons
How did you get into fandom: An ad in *Starlog* led me to *Pop Stand Express* which led me to Kathy Agel, who led me to Cheree
Best thing that's ever happened to you in fandom: First appearance of B.J. (Blue Jawa) at MWC in 1991. Winning the Star Award for Blue Jawa story and cartoons. Attending MWC.

STAR WARS

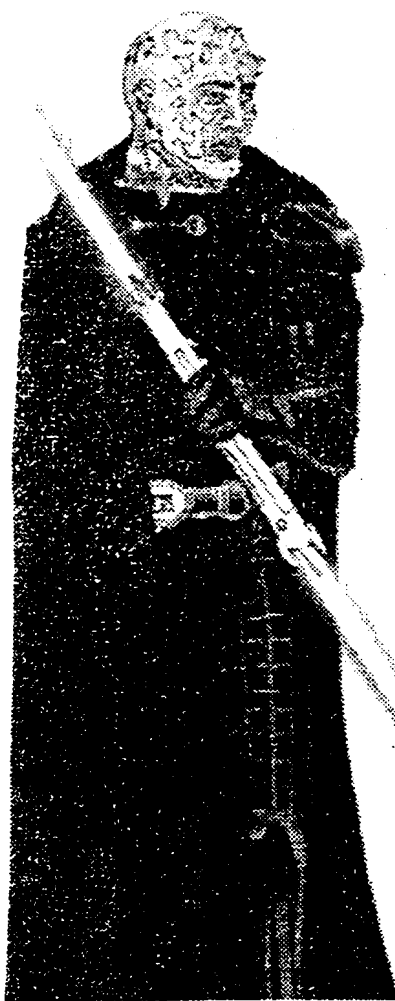


Can the Upcoming Film Satisfy the Universe of Lucas Fanatics?

By MICHAEL COLTON
Washington Post Staff Writer

PHOTOS FROM THE FORCE NET

Eager for any information on the upcoming "Star Wars" prequel, fans have substituted imagination for fact and drawn creatures like Watto, top, and Darth Maul, above.



Ewan McGregor plays a young Obi-Wan in the still-untitled Episode 1 of the new trilogy, but this conception of his appearance is strictly a fan's guess.

May 21, 1999.

It's nine months away, but for millions of people, the date already has mystic, even cosmic significance. Dreams will be realized, legends reborn. "A defining moment in the history of our culture," reads one Web site, which counts down the days, hours, minutes and seconds until May 21.

On that day we will experience "The Fight for Freedom." Or "Battle of the Force" or "Guardians of the Republic." Or "Quest for Hope," "Hope for the Future" or "Balance of the Force."

For all we know, May 21 will bring "Saving Private Skywalker," or "National Lampoon's Jedi Journey"—it doesn't really matter what the title is because the movie will be the new "Star Wars" film, now known as "the prequel" or "Episode 1" until George Lucas reveals something better.

On May 21, movie theaters will be more crowded than the Mos Eisley cantina, and if you know what that means, you're probably one of the millions of people who

are feverishly anticipating and speculating about this film on the Web, in magazines, at the National Air and Space Museum's "Star Wars" exhibit. Ever since Lucas announced in 1993 that he was finally going to fulfill his promise to deliver three new films set before his famous trilogy—"Star Wars" (1977), "The Empire Strikes

Back" (1980) and "Return of the Jedi" (1983) were, respectively, Episodes 4, 5 and 6—the interest in the production has been unprecedented.

"This movie has more riding on it for more people than any movie in history," says Michael Schur, 22, a writer for "Saturday Night Live" and a rabid "Star Wars" fan.

Schur's not referring to the film's producers, who are assured of making back far more than the film's \$115 million budget. The phenomenal success of last year's re-release of the trilogy proves that audiences are still hungry for droids and Wookiees. The three films took in a combined \$250 million domestically in 1997, pushing their cumulative domestic gross over \$1 billion. Plus, word of mouth for the prequel has already produced a voluminous amount of free publicity—for instance, this article.

No, Schur is talking about the fans, the generation that grew up in the "Star Wars" universe acting out Han Solo fantasies during recess and wait-

Droid Anticipation: Awaiting the Prequel

ing for another chapter. "Star Wars" was a childhood fixation that they never wanted to outgrow. The themes and characters still resonate, and all the comic books, novels and CD-ROMs that expand the "Star Wars" universe pale compared with a new episode from Lucas, who has not directed a movie since the original "Star Wars."

"Expectations are impossibly high, perhaps too high to be met," says Schur. "If the movie isn't good and doesn't satisfy its fans, it'll basically be the most crushing disappointment in film history."

Fans have devoted thousands of Web sites to "Star Wars," many of them trying to penetrate the strict secrecy surrounding the prequel's production and piece together what the new film will look and sound like. They flocked to theaters to see "The X-Files" and "Doctor Dolittle" because there were rumors that 20th Century Fox would attach a "Star Wars" trailer to these Fox movies. They purchase every "Star Wars" toy on the market. They download the parody, "Troops," which re-imagines "Star Wars" by way of "Cops," and search in vain for the hard-to-find embarrassment "The Star Wars Holiday Special," which aired on television in 1978 and featured the original actors, disco and Bea Arthur. ("One

of the most horrible atrocities committed by mankind," says Brian Linder, 22, of Columbia, S.C., who's seen a bootleg copy.)

"Star Wars" fans are not just boys in their twenties. There are women, too, and younger devotees who first saw the original films on video or in the theater last year. Noah Friedman, an 8-year-old from Potomac, follows the prequel gossip on the Web. When he saw the trilogy on screen last year, he already knew all the words from watching them at home. The third-grade critic is ready to make a prediction on the new film: "It's going to be good no matter what, probably, because George Lucas is a very, very good director."

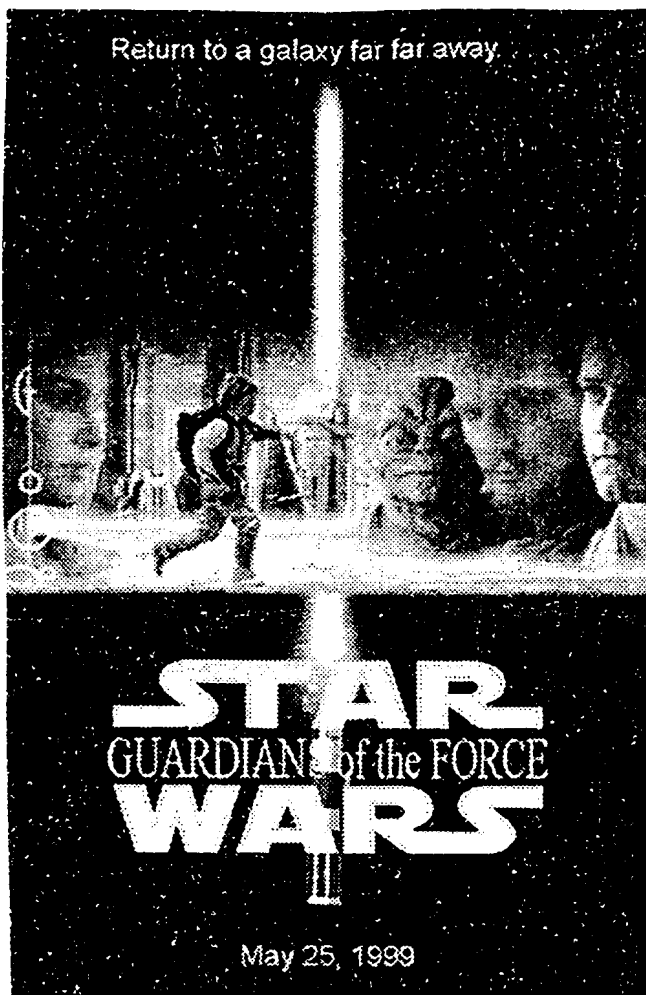
And please, do not mistake them for Trekkies. Though there are overlaps between the two groups, "Star Wars" fans are not necessarily "Star Trek" junkies. "Star Trek" fans think 'Star Wars' fans are pretentious, and 'Star Wars' fans think 'Star Trek' fans are geeks," says Kevin Murphy, 23, a research assistant for political spinner James Carville. Last Christmas, Carville and wife Mary Matalin acknowledged Murphy's passion and gave him an R2D2 telephone.

(For the record, The Washington Post declares that "Star Wars" fans are cooler. Trekkies, please set your phasers on stun.)

Filming for the prequel recently wrapped up at a studio in England, a castle in Italy and the Tunisian desert. Cast and crew signed standard confidentiality agreements, and information is hard to come by. But to counter the leaks, Lucasfilm has released certain facts on its official Web site, www.starwars.com.

Here is what we know to be true: Luke and Leia's future mother (played by Natalie Portman, who recently portrayed Anne Frank on Broadway) is a queen on a distant planet. The planet gets invaded by bad guys, and Jedi knights come to her rescue. Among the heroes are Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor from "Trainspotting") and a young Anakin Skywalker (Jake Lloyd from "Jingle All the Way"), who goes on to become Luke and Leia's father and ultimately Darth Vader. Liam Neeson's in the movie, as are Samuel L. Jackson and Yoda.

We also know—and this comes straight from Entertainment Weekly, which got a confirmation from the DreamWorks SKG studio—that Lucas chum Steven Spielberg saw foot-



Return to a galaxy far far away

STAR GUARDIAN of the FORCE WARS

May 25, 1999

THEFORCE.NET



PHOTOS BY ERIC LONG AND MARK AVINO—SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

At left, an unofficial Web site. Yoda, above, and Darth Vader, right, are in their formative years in the prequel.



FILE PHOTO/RY DARREN MICHAELS—MIRAMAX FILMS

Samuel L. Jackson had few answers to offer when asked about the upcoming movie.

age of the film and said, "Oh my God!"

We know there will be alien worlds (Tatooine, Coruscant) and droids. We know it will have very cool effects.

Apart from this, we don't know very much. But this hasn't stopped Web sites like *theforce.net* and *jedi-net.com* from investigating.

"Our information comes from all over the globe," says Scott Chitwood, a 25-year-old civil engineer in Houston who co-founded *theforce.net*. Crew members and extras have leaked details from the set that Chitwood's 10-person volunteer staff tries to confirm. He's even heard from fans who trekked to Tunisia to retrieve props as souvenirs. As on other sites, information is color-coded according to its degree of reliability.

The cast members themselves provide little help. When Samuel L. Jackson hosted "Saturday Night

Live" last season, Schur and other writers peppered him with "Star Wars" questions. But Jackson, who told them he had been given only the few script pages that involved his character, had no answers.

Some of the rumors floating on the Web sound plausible: that light-sabers will be double-sided and handled like martial-arts weapons, that clon-

ing will figure prominently in the plot, that Jabba the Hutt will return.

Others have already been disproved by Lucasfilm: that 40 percent of the film was out of focus and had to be re-shot, that Natalie Portman filmed a nude scene.

Lucasfilm spokeswoman Lynne Hale says Lucas has not paid much attention to the fan furor. "He doesn't have a lot of time to read the sites," she says. "He's working on the editing and special effects for Episode 1, and writing Episode 2." (Episodes 2 and 3, which will probably focus on the romance between Anakin and the

queen, and Anakin's journey to the Dark Side, will premiere sometime after 2001.)

If that's the case, Lucas has not seen the "virtual edition" of his movie, created by Roderick Vonhogen, who identifies himself as a 30-year-old Dutch priest. Vonhogen relied on rumors of the plot to create 170 digital images in a storyboard format that he hopes approximates the actual film. "It's like a big puzzle, and I'm looking forward to seeing how many pieces I managed to fit in the right place," Vonhogen wrote in an e-mail from the Netherlands.

Some of the rumors about the new film are troubling for die-hard fans—such as the one about Jar-Jar Binks, rumored to be a cute, pudgy three-

eyed alien. Anything "cute" sounds too much like the Ewoks, the furry creatures from "Return of the Jedi" that many fans viewed as an unwanted intrusion of crass commercialism.

However, the Ewoks did help attract a certain group of fans. "Ewoks are probably responsible for more young girls becoming interested in 'Star Wars' than anything else," says Amy Pronovost, a 23-year-old artist from Thunder Bay, Ontario. Pronovost believes female "Star Wars" fans are less vocal because science fiction is perceived as a male province. "I'm surprised there aren't more female fans, because of the fantasy element, the medieval myths. I think of 'Star Wars' more as science fantasy than science fiction."

Pronovost belongs to the don't-ask-don't-tell subset of fandom, those who are trying to avoid the hype and gossip. "I want to be completely blown away," she says.

Mike Stone, 25, an actor in New York, has instructed his friends to avoid discussing prequel rumors in his presence. "When I was in the fourth grade, my sister told me that Luke and Leia were twins before I saw 'Return of the Jedi' and that really ruined it," he says. "When my butt is sitting in that seat [for the movie] I want to be surprised by virtually everything in front of me."

Stone says he will, however, allow himself to watch the film's trailer, which is expected to debut around the holidays. No one knows which film it will be affixed to. The latest "Star Trek" film is a possibility, as is DreamWorks' animated movie "The Prince of Egypt."

Some people, like Bleu, a 29-year-old clothing designer in New York who goes by one name, are more interested in the film's merchandising. "Getting to Toys R Us and fighting with the little kids for the action figures—now that's gonna be a lot harder than it is to see the movie," says Bleu, whose office is a "small museum" containing over 2,000 "Star Wars" toys. "God forbid McDonald's decides to do a tie-in with it, and I have to go buy Happy Meals."

And where will all these fans be on May 21, 1999?

Chitwood says he'll see the movie at a science fiction convention in Dallas. Pronovost will probably be at the one theater in Thunder Bay that has Lucas's patented THX-enhanced sound system. Some staffers from *theforce.net* plan to meet in Los Angeles. Stone's rear end will be at the Ziegfeld in New York.

And he'll be praying: "I just hope to God it doesn't suck."



A couple of swingers: Carrie Fisher & Mark Hamill in RETURN OF THE JEDI. Fisher denies she's participating, as screenwriter, in George Lucas' STAR WARS prequels.



**STAR
WARS**

he wait, or part of it, is over. On Sept. 25, Lucasfilm at long last answered one of the more profound questions about the *Star Wars* prequel due next spring: Just what is it going to be called? The title, announced on the official website, will be, drumroll, please, *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*. A few fans reacted to the news like a Wookiee with a hair ball. "That's a pretty strange title there George,"

groused one Web devotee. "It's gonna take some time to get used to this one." Others were on board: "[I]t sounds okay to me, and far better than a lot of the rumored ones," said another. And never mind that ILM will likely have to conjure up some special effect to get the most multisyllabic title since *The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill, But Came Down a Mountain* onto theater marquees. But is the title written in stone? Remember, Lucas originally announced that 1983's *Return of the Jedi* would be called *Revenge of the Jedi*. Don't get your hopes up, says Lucasfilm's Lynne Hale. "Phantom Menace," she confirms, "is the title." Too bad. We were pulling for *Jabba Gump*. —Daniel Fierman

● Despite previously published rumors to the contrary, actress/screenwriter Carrie Fisher enlightened me that she is *not* working on a rewrite of George Lucas' script, *STAR WARS: EPISODE I*. Best known for her role as Princess Leia in the original *STAR WARS* trilogy, Fisher is currently one of the highest paid script doctors in Hollywood. She did not, however, take her red pen to Lucas' latest saga. "As his friend, I read it, but I did not sit and tinker with it," she says. "I wouldn't say if I did, because he's not [signatory to] the [Writers] Guild [and] they'd come after me." In a recent interview with *FF*, Fisher discussed her *STAR WARS* character, her relationships with Lucas and Steven Spielberg, and the difficulties of being an ambitious career woman in male-dominated Tinseltown. Look for my cover story on this intelligent and talented woman in an upcoming ish.

Obi-Wan Kenobi wins again

Star Wars coins a new fortune for Sir Alec

by CATHERINE MILNER
and CHRIS OLIVER WILSON

SIR ALEC Guinness has said he is "very pleased" about a multi-million-pound windfall he will receive from the successful re-release of the *Star Wars* — 20 years after he acted the role of the wise Jedi knight, Obi-Wan Kenobi, in the smash-hit film.

Sir Alec, 82, confirmed to *The Sunday Telegraph* that, by taking a percentage rather than a flat fee, he is still raking in stupendous royalties from a movie first released in 1977.

The deal has assumed legendary status in Hollywood and has been used as a blueprint by top-earning stars. But it was a gamble at the time, as few predicted *Star Wars* would prove such a box-office winner.

Sir Alec's canniness has made him one of the highest-paid British actors. But he discounted industry gossip that the re-release has clinched him the highest fee to have been paid for a single movie.

"Some have said that I have already earned £120 million — divide that by 20 and you might be nearer the mark," Sir Alec said. "But the sums keep changing."

He said the re-release of the film, which has already taken £31 million gross in America, would earn him more money. *Star Wars* will be re-released in Britain on March 21.

"I still have a contract which says that I earn a percentage cut from the film and, of course, I'm very pleased about it," Sir Alec

said, joking that he was incapable of acting nowadays. One of Britain's most distinguished actors, he retired in 1995 after 60 years of stage and screen roles.

His agent at the time of *Star Wars*, Dennis van Thal, is understood to have struck a deal in which Sir Alec would receive two per cent of the gross royalties paid to the director, George Lucas. The director received a fifth of the box-office takings. *Star Wars* has grossed \$560 million (£373 million) worldwide.

Sir Alec would also have received royalties for the video release and the film's two sequels, in which his character returned in spiritual form.

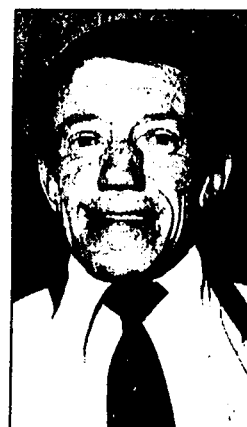
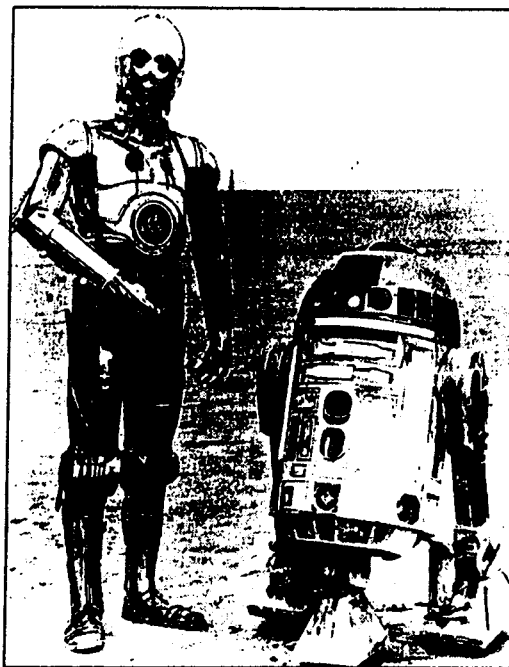
His role as Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*, and in the sequels — *The Empire Strikes Back*, released in 1980, and *Return of the Jedi* which followed in 1984 — will have earned him more than his combined earnings from his 40 other film roles. These include *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), for which he won an Oscar.

Last week Sir Alec said he did not like discussing his income from the films. "If I tell you more, I'll end up having to open 100 or more begging letters a day."

Another to benefit from the then-unconventional deal on payment has been Kenny Baker, the 3ft 8in dwarf who played the robot R2D2.

"My cut for *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* was less than one per cent," he said.

"But when you're talking about millions and millions



Cut above the rest: Kenneth Baker, who played the robot R2D2, left, in the film *Star Wars* starring Alec Guinness, right, as the Jedi knight. Both are still reaping the benefits of a deal seen as a blueprint by the rest of Hollywood

of dollars, it gets very lucrative. I haven't got a clue how much I made from it. I haven't bothered to count it all up, but I did very well out of it, and bought a house and a Mercedes."

Mr Baker, 62, added: "For the first movie only Alec Guinness and the Americans were on small percentages, not the British."

"But they made so much money they were almost embarrassed into giving all the English guys percentages on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*."

Many of the technicians who worked on *Star Wars* at Elstree studios in Hertfordshire were offered percentages but turned them down. It was a decision they would come to regret. When

George Lucas made the first film, few people had an inkling of its future success. His script, for which he was paid £15,000, was turned down by two studios before Twentieth Century Fox agreed to finance it.

Although the heroic exploits of Luke, Han, Leia and Obi-Wan Kenobi instantly captured the imagination of millions, Lucas himself was "really disappointed", feeling that shortage of cash meant the film did not live up to anything like its full potential.

Some of the technicians working on the film seemed to agree. "It's nothing but comic book dialogue and bad acting," said one. The critics were equally caustic, calling it "trashy", "pseudo-religious piffle" and "sterile and chilly... for people raised on junk food".

Fox was delighted to accept Lucas's offer to swap his director's fee of £250,000 for the serialisation and licensing rights. This was to prove to be the basis of his £1.2 billion fortune.

Mr Baker, who has worked mostly with a one-man cabaret act and in pantomimes since *Star Wars*, is one hoping it makes mountains of gold. "I'm just a working actor and I need to make hay while the sun shines. If I make lots and lots of money over the next few years, I will probably retire."

He added: "We all did very well out of it, and we're all very grateful to George Lucas."



BY BENJAMIN SVETKEY

THAT TO BE Wan

"WHAT I'VE BEEN TOLD TO say," Ewan McGregor announces after chugging down his third beer, "is that we're in negotiations. But the truth is, I want to do it, they want me to do it, so I'm doing it." ★ The "it" in question, of course, is only the role of a lifetime, playing the most beloved Jedi master ever to tangle with the Dark Side. As the whole world is about to learn, McGregor, 26,

has been signed to star as the young Obi-Wan Kenobi in the new *Star Wars* prequels, a bit of casting news that instantly makes him the biggest thing out of Scotland since argyle socks, or at least since Sean Connery. ★ "Actually," says the scruffily charming actor in his bristly Highland burr, "I really want to play Princess Leia. Stick some big pastries on my head. Now, *that* would be interesting."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NIGEL PARRY



LAST YEAR, MCGREGOR CREATED A HUGE splash—literally—by chasing an opium suppository down a toilet bowl in the indie hit *Trainspotting*. That harrowing performance won him an Actor of the Year award from the London Film Critics Circle and made him one of the hottest young thespians in the realm (see page 33 for his competition). Next to those battling brothers from Oasis, he's become the biggest pop god in England, a national antihero for the post-punk-but-still-pissed-off generation. And yet, despite *Trainspotting's* respectable run in the U.S. (it earned \$16 million) and his role opposite Gwyneth Paltrow in the even more respectable *Emma* (\$22 million), most Americans haven't a clue who he is—even if they did happen to catch his special guest spot on *ER* last February, in which he held Julianna Margulies hostage in a convenience store for the show's entire hour.

So who is this man who would be Kenobi? For starters, he's the type of guy who isn't afraid to drop trou in public, as American moviegoers are about to discover. In Peter Greenaway's new art-house mind-bender *The Pillow Book*, which opened June 6, McGregor plays a bisexual Englishman who lets his Hong Kong girlfriend draw calligraphy all over his bare body—including his unsheathed, um, lightsaber. "Being naked was far more worrisome for everyone else on the set than it was for me," he reports. "I actually enjoyed it, the truth be told. There was something incredibly powerful about it. Usually you'd get arrested for that sort of thing, but I got paid."

This month, American audiences can also see McGregor—fully clothed—in *Brassed Off*, a small-but-scrappy English film about a doomed mining town. In the fall, he'll be costarring with Nick Nolte and Patricia Arquette in *Nightwatch*, his first American thriller, in which he'll play a morgue attendant who gets mixed up in a murder. He'll also turn up as a hapless janitor who kidnaps Cameron Diaz in *A Life Less Ordinary*, a romantic comedy by the same writer-director-producer team that made *Trainspotting*. And he's just finished shooting Todd Haynes' *Velvet Goldmine*, a David Bowie-Iggy Pop-inspired

love story set in the glam-rock '70s, due out next year.

It's an eclectic slate of projects, with the emphasis on smart, offbeat independent films—in other words, the sort of movies that don't spin off many toy tie-ins. "When I met with agents in L.A., they would tell me you had to do two movies for yourself and then two for the business," he says. "And I thought, 'F--- off. No, you don't. You do every film because you want to do good work. Because you're interested in making good movies and working with good people.' To do a crappy event movie for a lot of money, like *Independence Day*—I would never taint my soul with that crap."

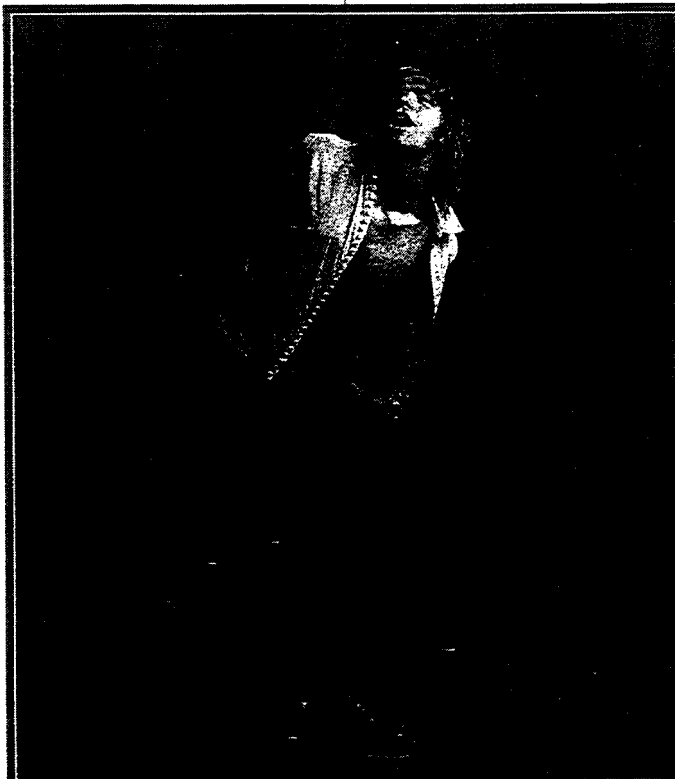
Of course, there's a truckload of irony pulling up here: The untainted maverick is about to start shooting what could easily become the most commercially successful event movies ever made. If dusted-off, 20-year-old releases can rake in a half billion bucks worldwide, imagine what sort of cash flow a fresh batch of *Star Wars* flicks will generate. Still, McGregor sees a difference. "I don't think of them as event movies," he says. "It's not like being in *Robocop 5* or something. The *Star Wars* movies are way beyond studio pictures. They're enormous. I can't say no."

There are certainly plenty of reasons to say yes—like his 16-month-old daughter, Clara (by wife Eve Maurakis, a French costume designer he met while filming an English TV production of *Charlotte's Web* two years ago). "I was 6 years old when *Star Wars* came out," he explains. "I remember standing outside school waiting to be picked up, so excited. And my daughter's going to be 6 when the new *Star Wars* movies are out. That's f---ing lovely in a way, you know?"

There's another family connection to the series as well: McGregor says his uncle, actor Denis Lawson (*Local Hero*), was "the only X-wing pilot to survive all three" of the original *Star Wars* movies. Lawson, not surprisingly, was also the inspiration for McGregor's own early acting ambitions.

"I was brought up in a small conservative town [Crieff] in Scotland," he says. "And my uncle used to come up from London in the '70s wearing sheepskin waistcoats and beads, with no shoes and long hair, giving people flowers and stuff. I just went, *wow*. Right then I decided to become an actor—even though I had no idea what that meant."

What it meant initially was leaving school at 16, a brief



AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE TRILOGY:

"They're just little fairy stories, really, there's not a great deal going on.... They go from here, and they get stuck here.... There's a fight there, and then they end up here."

stint at a Scottish repertory theater, then three years at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. What it means now is that McGregor can barely stroll the streets of London without triggering a reenactment of the train station mob scenes in *A Hard Day's Night*. "It's not *that* bad, but it is on the cusp of becoming a problem," says *Trainspotting* director Danny Boyle. "All that constant recognition gets tiresome after a while. He can't even pick his nose in public."

VISITING NEW YORK, DOWNING BREWS IN A CHELSEA restaurant, McGregor couldn't seem less concerned with the perils of fame—or maybe he's simply relishing his last taste of American anonymity. Unassuming, unpretentious, and on the way to becoming utterly sloshed, he comes across as the ultimate anti-celebrity, a bloke for all seasons. In any case, if anybody in the room is staring at him, it's only because he's been partying all night and sort of looks it (he's still got a big ink-stamp mark from a nightclub smudged on his wrist). "I love New York," he murmurs happily into his beer.

Of course, now that he's signed for *Star Wars*, these sorts of quiet public moments are history. As the new Kenobi, he'll be swarmed by fans in every restaurant and nightclub in every city on the planet. It's a huge change in his life, an instant thrust into global superstardom. "Ewan's got the world at his feet," as *Brassed Off* director Mark Herman puts it, "and that makes this a dangerous time for him." To deal with the intense pressure, McGregor is using that old Jedi mind trick of trying not to think about it. Instead, he's concentrating on his killer Alec Guinness impersonation.

"I *have* to get his accent," he says. "He's got this very specific older man's voice. It'd be great if I could trace it back to his youth and get it right." He takes a swig of beer, clears his throat, and gives it a whirl. "Yoooz the Force, Luke. Stretch out your *feeeelings*."

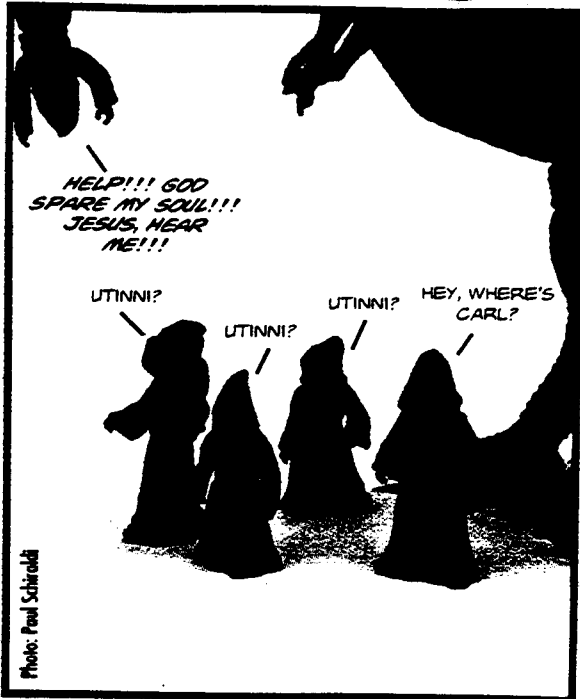
Now, if only he could nail that Carrie Fisher impersonation. ■



BLOWING OFF STEAM

Rocking in the Velvet Goldmine; marching with Tara Fitzgerald in Brassed Off; soaking with Pillow Book's Vivian Wu

BIG SHOT



JURASSIC JAWAS

Star Wars: Power of the Force '97/Jurassic Park (Kenner)

1997 looks to be a *verrry* good year for the Cincinnati-based Kenner company. A long time ago and not so far away, the then-fledgling toy company found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow by snatching up the master toy license for "Star Wars." Twenty years later, Kenner is enjoying even greater success with its brand-new Star Wars toys, buoyed by the recent Special Edition re-releases of George Lucas' trilogy. Add to that Kenner's lines based on the "Jurassic Park" sequel "The Lost World" and "Batman & Robin," and you'll see that Kenner's got probably the three biggest licenses of the summer movie box office. And when it comes to associated toy sales, that's a no-brainer.

MOVE ALONG,
MOVE ALONG...





FROM A CERTAIN POINT OF VIEW

CONGRATS ON REACHING MILESTONE

Marti Schuller
415 S.E. Annette
Lee's Summit, MO 64063-3403

Cheree, you're to be commended on reaching this wonderful milestone of fifty great issues of SE. What a beautiful issue this one is, too! I loved the use of the color SW photos throughout as well, especially the front banner. Lovely!

Thanks for printing the lyrics to that gem "The Star Wars Cantina". While I have a copy of the tape that you were generous enough to share, having the words on paper is a pleasure.

I'd like to add my congratulations to both Susan Matthews and Martha Wells on their continuing success in the oceanic world of pro fiction. Well done!

While I always enjoy SE, I have to confess that I greatly relished this issue's "Meet the Southern Enclave..." The diversity of SW fans is always fascinating to me. What a mixed group we are, all brought together by our mutual love of three films. It's a little mind-boggling, to be honest, but I love it.

Again, thanks for all your years of hard work and loyalty. Long may you and SE continue to prosper and grow!

Now, briefly, to the letters.

Z. P. Florian: I love your idea for a funeral at MWC for all our Anakins. Let's do it. We mostly wear black anyway.

Lisa Cowan: Well, I do think we have to accept the new SW films as "canon", like it or not. However, this

does not mean we have to include them or coincide with them in our own writings. Technically, that will make a lot of stories "alternate", but we've always had such stories and, I suspect, always will. A good story is worth reading anytime, whether it accepts and incorporates the new films, adheres to that writer's former views, or veers off into a completely new direction. I do foresee some Anakin/Vader writers especially preferring to ignore the new films and continue writing as they always have. They will, IMO, maintain an audience, regardless, because they are good writers. Stories will appear, I'm sure, that deal with the new films, while others will further explore and expand only the original three movie characters. I hope there's room and tolerance for us all.

A. G. Steyn: Loved your additions to the "pants" game. Addictive, isn't it?

Maggie Nowakowska (and Susan): Sincerest condolences on your losses. It would be wonderful to see you in Lansing next year. We can celebrate our own "golden" half-century marks together while celebrating (?) the new SW film. Think you'll make it to the con? Any chance?

Kim Pecherski: Welcome! If you're joining the madness in Lansing again next year, be sure to stop by the Millennium Mall and introduce yourself. (Those name badges are too small for these trifocal eyes.) Sooner or later, we all seem to pass through this suite and it's a great place for meeting.

Your first LoC was fine. I look forward to more in the future.

On a personal note, I'm finally going to get to Star Tours and the new Indy experience since Dennis and I (and my sister and her husband) are off to celebrate our 29th anniversary in Orlando come October. I cannot tell you how I'm looking forward to this!

Then, on Nov. 28th I will become a bona fide mother-in-law when our youngest son Steven weds his soul-mate. Means I have to don a formal, which daunts me immensely. I've never even tried one on, folks. No, obviously I missed that rite of passage, the prom. Just hold a good thought that I don't trip in the aisle and ruin the ceremony, please.

'Til next time, have a beautiful autumn and happy holidays to all.

ALWAYS IN MOTION IS THE FUTURE

Matthew Whitney
1003 Allen Street
Springfield, MA 01118-2557

August 30, 1998

What a great 50th issue! Again, congratulations and thank you, Cheree. The color mastheads were a neat surprise. In your opening editorial you commented that you feel "*Star Wars* fandom has become the most polite, considerate and tolerant fandom around." I heartily agree, hence why I'm still aboard this letterzine after so many years. *Robin of Sherwood* also has a terrific core of fans.

I'm happy to hear that recording of "The Star Wars Cantina" was such a hit at MWC.

I have a couple of comments on the article "The Emperor's Advocate" by David Bratman. The first arises from a line from the paragraph in the middle of page 5, about Luke ignoring Yoda's advice and going to Bespin, prompting Yoda's declaration that it will mean Luke's failure. The author stated he "waited for that failure all through ROTJ." Fearing overusing the adage, but "always in motion is future." I do not look on Yoda's prediction as a guarantee but rather only as a warning. Luke falling to the darkside or some other disastrous happening may be what Yoda was sensing, but that it did not occur does not strike me as a flaw of the film (ROTJ). In this I am recalling the Pern novels and many of Jaxom's actions. His growth was partly through acting beyond or even against the advice of his elders. Here in the SW universe, where Yoda believes the risks are not worth the lives of Luke's friends, Luke obviously disagrees. So, I look at Luke's decision to risk danger and go to Bespin as a bifurcation. It represents a transition from his life as a pure student who obeys his mentors to a young man who shoulders the responsibilities for the decisions he makes and the actions that follow.

[Letting everyone in on a private joke, I used the term

"bifurcation" because in addition to its traditional usage it is a mathematics term that my classmates and I spent *weeks* trying to get a handle on this past summer at grad school. When our psychology prof used the term later in the term, all the math students turned to each other and had a fit of giggles over using the term that was frustrating us so much in a more "mundane" application.]

Second comment on "The Emperor's Advocate": At the bottom of page 5 the author describes the act of Anakin's/Darth's redemption by hurling the Emperor into the chasm as, "He returns to the good side in a reflex of pure anger." This could be semantics, but I'd not label that as an act of emotional anger but more as an act of parental devotion to save a child. True, it was a violent act, but was it motivated through anger? Is a legal execution an act of anger by the part of the executioner? Does a jury convict the criminal out of anger? Is the judge's sentence based on anger? Were the motivations of those (the legislators/the public) who created the law that calls for capital punishment acting out of anger? Just because the action is violent does not mean the emotion that drives it is one of anger. For many advocates of capital punishment the motivation is fear, not anger. For many it is callous hate and anger. In ROTJ, I believe Anakin's actions to be of the more noble form of love for a child.

RE Torture scenes in the SW saga: let's step back and contrast how such scenes were received by the movie going public with the violence in *Temple of Doom*. Where we debate the logic of torturing droids and whether Chewie was subjected to auditory torture on Bespin, many parents refused to bring kids to TOD because it was too violent. So, maybe Lucas' decision to go for a lighter manner of establishing the evil of characters was a wise move. Rather than focusing on the logic or illogic of droid torture in ROTJ, I took it as a quick brush stroke to establish the evil of Jabba. If he is so cruel that he can devise means to torture a droid, just imagine the torture that awaits our other heroes if they get captured. This establishing of the character of the villain is done quickly, and in a manner that will not overly traumatize the young viewers in the audience. (In fact, the scene is one of the more humorous in the first third of the film.)

Z. P. asks for comments on "Lucas said that after watching the first three movies we'll look at the movies we had seen first, in an entirely different light." I don't really know nor have strong leanings toward what sort of way we will view them differently, but I do think this will happen. Hasn't it happened already? TESB forever changed how I viewed ANH. Both a favorite and least favorite moment in my ANH viewings was at my very first con during the summer of '83. Not only was it to be my 100th time seeing any one of the SW films (not a single film, a total for all three), it was occurring at my first con (SpaceCon in

Springfield, a *Space: 1999* con — I went not for 1999 but because it was a CON). The downer for me involved some of the audience interaction with the film. Among all the positive enthusiasm for the film, when Luke asked Obi-Wan about his father, the scene was punctuated by audience jokes that Luke would regret these feelings of love for a father he never knew. I felt the fans were laughing at an extremely important emotional scene for Luke. So, applying Z.P.'s call for commentary on how the prequels will impact the trilogy to this, I feel we have seen this in how TESB and ROTJ irrevocably affected many moments in ANH. The above-mentioned scene now evokes an entirely different emotional response from the response it produced in the days before May 1980. The same applies to any references to Luke pining over Leia. And I'm not talking about fans having good-natured fun by making jokes. When I watch the scene of Luke and Ben discussing Luke's father for the first time, I now react with sympathy that Luke must go through such an emotional wringer before the redemption of Anakin.

In this discussion I am strongly reminded of how I backed into *Robin of Sherwood*. I started with the second of Jason Connery's episodes and was entirely confused about any references to the first Robin. When I finally saw Michael Praed's episodes, it was knowing he was destined to die. That strongly colored my view of his character. When the sheriff's men ultimately kill him, I saw it as the predestined fate of the character. In contrast those fans that had watched it from the start might have looked at the death with emotions of shock at the character being struck down prematurely. Similarly, in *Blake's 7* my first impulse after seeing the tragic end to the series (the infamous final episode when they are all killed ... or were they?) was to re-watch the entire series, from #1 on. I sought out the experience of watching episodes in light of this new information, seeking a new, deeper understanding of the characters. When *Romeo and Juliet* was first staged by Shakespeare, the story was well known in popular culture at that time. The death of the lovers was not a shock — it was expected. Part of the experience is in knowing the tragic fate that awaits these characters and how the actions they take lead them toward this end. That is what I am hoping to get from the prequels ... a new perspective on the existing trilogy. Not that it will ever take away from my adoration of these films, but rather that it will add yet another layer to the Saga.

Fearing this will invite Lucas bashing, I was also struck by the thought that this may be nothing other than advance hype over the films. Lucas cannot come out and say it's perfectly fine to not bother seeing the prequels. By phrasing it in a manner that implies existing fans *must* see these new efforts or else they will be really missing some important POV on the films they already love, Lucas may

be hoping to instill the fervor to plunk down your ticket money.

Marti Schuller mentioned some feelings of reluctance to share *our* fandom with newbies. She was torn over the wanting to keep a good thing as it is and feeling bad that these negative feelings of reluctance to share were part of her make-up (at least that's how I read it). You are not alone. My prime fear is that the new generation of fans will not carry the reverence for the existing trilogy as I do. I don't give a womp rat's *** over which films will generate more box office, I just don't want *my* trilogy forgotten. Fortunately, that does not look like how it will be. I really think the prequels will be a really good thing for the originals.

Judith Klinger: An excellent point re what good did it do the master plan to have Chewie locked in Jabba's dungeons. How did they ever expect Jabba to put Han and him into the same cell (as happened) if things went somewhat awry? Could it have been that they hoped to lull Jabba into a degree of complacency over the capture of Chewie, thinking the greatest threat was settled? This doesn't jive with Luke's appearance, though, what with Jabba's rebuke to Bib that he was not to have allowed Luke to stroll in.

In re to Tim's comments about my not believing the alien connection with the "Face" on Mars:

Yes, I really do not believe there is any intelligence behind the formation. To me it is a natural formation, shadows, and poor camera resolution. I do not see it as proof of some vanished civilization.

I do believe in extraterrestrial life/intelligence, but have not been convinced that we have found satisfactory proof to date.

A lying government ... yes, but not on this issue.

I've written to Tim at length on the issue, sharing my views and inviting his rebuttal. It seemed too off the subject of SW to ask Cheree to use this zine as our forum for the discussion. Regarding the recent photos of the "Face" taken by the Mars Global Surveyor, Catherine Churko mentioned these and I'm wondering if anyone else has seen them? Catherine, where you commented that they were "disappointing," I thought they were impressive (because of the higher resolution of not just these, but most of the new photos). The likeness to a face is largely gone in these new photos, but I doubt that will be viewed as conclusive evidence of the origins (or lack thereof) of the face. Tim voiced the views of many that feel the government to be hiding something from us, and my guess is that the new photos will be taken by many as yet another attempt at a cover-up. My original motive in tossing in my two-cents on the topic was not in wishing to argue the topic. Rather, I wanted to state my position that I for one do not subscribe to the "face"/vanished civilization school

of thought. [Maybe this was all spurred by my personal chip-on-the-shoulder that often when I introduce myself as a fan of SF/F a "mundane" will immediately think I'm a believer in UFOs and little green men, waiting to hop the next comet to rendezvous with the Mother Ship.]

While I'm off the subject, a follow-up to my job concerns aired last ish: Our newly renovated high school did in fact open on time under a new administration. The renovation work was not finished, but we opened nevertheless (a similar fiasco occurred just two years ago when another new HS opened). But at least we are finally in a really impressive building and the work still needing to be done is largely details. The improvements should go a long way toward revitalizing the institution. I'll be teaching Algebra 2 and AP-Calculus for this year and am only one more summer away from finishing the Masters degree program mentioned in my bio of SE#50.

Back on the subject of SW, I was listening to an excellent audio tape from the *B7* universe – *Travis: The Final Act*. The tape has a discussion that I think sheds some light on our recent discussion of Luke's desire to join the "academy" at the start of ANH. (For those not into *B7*, Travis is the main baddie from the first season. He is a career Federation officer, obsessed with killing Blake, brutal in his methods, and the embodiment of the evil of the Federation until that shifts to Servalan and Travis is betrayed and becomes a renegade.) In a Q/A with series script editor Chris Boucher, Travis' thoughts on the morality of the Federation (*B7*'s evil empire) are discussed:

Q: Do you think Travis believed the Federation was a force for good?

CB: I don't think initially he would have any idealistic feelings about it at all either way.... The wondrous thing about getting young lads to go into the forces ... they haven't formed any attitudes or views. They are malleable. Travis would have been that. So, I mean, he didn't go into the forces thinking this was a force for good or any of all that stuff, it was just a career. Once in, once trained, the training requires that you don't think, it's important that you don't think, because if you do think, you cease to be a tool of the ruling elite.... I don't think he would ever have thought about it until he was kicked out, until he was personally betrayed, I don't think he would have thought in terms of good or evil at all.

That might be the attitude of Luke and Biggs when they dreamed of going off to join the academy. Extending the discussion, does anyone have opinions on what might have led Biggs to joining the rebels? I'm sure zillions of stories have had that for their theme.

Until next issue... Walk the Skies!

FIRST LOC

Denise Roper
7586 Main Street
Houma, LA 70360

August 23, 1998

Hi, everyone! This is my first letter to SE, so allow me to introduce myself. I'm a 29-year-old music teacher who enjoys playing the flute, reading SF and fantasy, corresponding, writing poetry, and listening to classical music. I also enjoy listening to Broadway musicals, Celtic music, and movie soundtracks. My reading interests (in addition to SF&F) include psychology, religion, the Arthurian legends, astronomy, and mythology. I've been a SW fan and collector since I was eight years old, but amazingly enough, I didn't discover SW fanzines until recently. Lately, I've been trying to catch up on what I have missed.

I like to collect the SW books, comics, action figures, dolls, magazine articles, cards, and other miscellaneous odds and ends. Luke is my favorite character, but I also like Leia, Han and Lando among others. My main connection to fandom is through the mail because I don't have Internet access nor am I a convention-goer. Those of you who enjoy corresponding with SW pen pals, please write!

A. G.: I thought your list of "pants" quotes was hysterical! You've inspired me to make a list of my own. Dead Bothans, tell me what you think of these:

"You came here in those pants? You've braver than I thought!"

"I warn you not to underestimate my pants."

"Sir, if any of my pants will help, I'll gladly donate them."

"Look at the size of those pants!"

"What's in there?" "Only what you take with you ... your pants, you will not need them."

"If pants are all that you love, then that's what you'll receive!"

"Listen, if you were to rescue her, the reward would be ... well, more pants than you can imagine!"

"Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good pair of pants at your side, kid."

"Take care of your pants, Han ... I guess that's what you're best at."

"And I thought your pants smelled bad on the *outside*!"

"Well, I guess you don't know everything about pants yet."

"Asteroids do not concern me, Admiral. I want those pants, not excuses."

"These pants have a few surprises left in 'em, sweetheart."

"Hey, I knew there was more to you than pants."

"You look absolutely beautiful. You truly belong here with us among the pants."

"I am altering the pants. Pray I don't alter them any further."

Okay, I'll admit, some of these are pretty lame. It's not my fault that all the good ones have been taken!

Say, what's all this about TESB outtakes? (SE#49). Tell us more, please, A.G.!

Pat and Matthew: Add me to the ranks of *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* fans. I've always hoped there would be a sequel which would explain what happened to the Kaiburr crystal, what Halla's fate was, and how Luke, Leia, and the droids managed to beg off Mimban. All these loose ends really bother me. There is a great fanfiction sequel, "On Deadly Ground", which appeared in *Another Sky*.. #10, but the story takes place in an alternate reality. I still want to see a profiction sequel. Does anyone else out there feel the way I do?

In regards to a tree having a dark side: could the tree on Dagobah once have been a sentient creature like the Neti tree being in *Dark Empire II*? (I think his name was "Master Ood.") Could there have been dark Jedi or Sith Lords among the Neti? Another explanation is that there is an evil spirit inhabiting the tree, trapped there for all eternity or until someone can free it from its imprisonment, kind of like Merlin in his crystal cave.

Judith K.: I think "Darth" might be some kind of title or honorific that suggests the meaning "one who serves the Dark", so when Kenobi addressed him as "Darth" instead of "Anakin", he was acknowledging his belief that his former pupil had gone over to the dark side completely. It could have been meant as an insult, though Vader probably didn't see it as such. I wonder, could "Obi-Wan" be some kind of title as well? Hopefully we will find out the meaning of these names in the prequels. I don't buy that "OB-1" stuff about Kenobi being a clone. We shall see.

I agree with you about the Greedo scene in the Special Editions. GL has created his own alternate reality with this scene. Where will it end? Will he come back in another 20 years with some more nonsense like this? Well, since Darth Vader turns out to be a good guy in the end, let's take out that stuff where he cuts off Luke's hand. We wouldn't want him to set a bad example for the youngsters, now would we?

Tina: I, too, am glad to see that Ian McDiarmid will be portraying the wicked Senator Palpatine in the prequels. He'll be the kind of senator who wallows in the vilest sort of corruption while presenting a seemingly stainless reputation to the galactic populace. I envision him as a kind of charismatic leader, similar to Hitler, whose rise to

power will involve a kind of worshipful adoration from his followers who are blind to his evil. The Great Purge of the Jedi could be presented as a galactic Holocaust. There are great dramatic possibilities here, but will GL dare to use them?

Gerald: No matter how mainstream SW becomes, there will always be a cultic following of fans like us who deeply love the saga and who express our love creatively in outlets such as fanzines. We are a secret sect within the larger religion, so to speak. Does this make SW fandom seem special again? It does to me. I'm just glad to finally be a member of the SE sect at last!

Debbie: Yes, A. C. Crispin did do a fantastic job on the Han Solo trilogy! How many of your folks out there would like to see a young Han make a cameo appearance in the prequels? He'd be about 11 years old at the time of Luke and Leia's birth, I think. My information is based on the SW Encyclopedia's chronology which shows that Han was 29 during the events of ANH. Luke and Leia were a mere 18 years old during that time period, so Han is 11 years their senior. Well, if the lad does make an appearance, he'll probably steal every scene he's in (and probably lift a few wallets, too).

Speaking of characters' ages, I've noticed some discrepancies in early SW material. In the revised fourth draft of Episode IV, Luke is described as "a farm boy with heroic aspirations who looks much younger than his eighteen years." The same script describes Leia as "a beautiful young girl (about sixteen years old)." Whoa! If they're supposed to be *twins*, how could Luke be two years older than Leia? I've always thought that Lucas dreamed up that bit about them being long lost brother and sister to resolve the "who gets the girl" dilemma without Luke getting his feelings hurt by her. This way, Han and Leia live happily ever after, and Luke doesn't get his heart broken. (We think. I have my doubts.) The SW novelization says that Luke is 20 in ANH and the ESB novel says he's 23, right? No problem, but I have a set of TESB Topps trading cards from 1980 which lists Luke's age as 22 and Leia's as 20. There's that two year gap again. What strange twins these are! And their poor mother. Imagine being in labor for so long! Well, according to the "official" timeline given in the SW Encyclopedia, both Luke and Leia are 18 in ANH, 21 in TESB, and 22 in ROTJ. I'm glad someone finally clarified this for us. The only explanation I could think of for the earlier age differences between the two characters is that originally GL hadn't planned on them being twins, or even related to one another. He says he did, but that's obviously not true. Then again, maybe Luke's age is given in Tatooinian years and Leia's in Alderaanian years. Convert them to galactic standard years and they come out equal. Well, it could be true ... from a certain point of view. My

personal belief is that ol' George tells more fibs than Obi-Wan Kenobi. Not that we don't love 'em both. Pretty soon GL will show us that Darth Vader was really L&L's long lost *mother*, and we'll believe that, too. Really. I think his approach to creating the whole saga has been of the Indiana Jones variety: "I'm making this up as I go along."

Amanda: Hello, if you're out there. It's been ages since I've heard from you. Please write and tell me how you're doing these days. It's been far too long, Skysister!

Judy and Marti: Congrats on Smelly #3 winning Best SW Zine! You two and all of your contributors deserve some recognition for a job well done. Keep up the great work.

Cheree: SE#50 was super. I especially loved the full color pages. (More!) I can't wait to see the next issue. ((Ed: Don't look for too many of those color mastheads. I can't afford it! I just did these to make #50 a special issue.))

Enclavers, I hope you'll respond to my comments. Until next time, MTFBWY! Time to give the Omega Signal...

SEXUAL SYMBOLISM

Belea T. Keeney
P. O. Box 280497
Tampa, FL 33682
beatkay@juno.com

August 16, 1998

((Ed's Note: The address published in SE51 for Belea was incorrect. Please note her correct address and email above.))

First off, congratulations, Cheree, on your 50th issue. What a milestone And the issue looked lovely, the color was a nice touch of course. So, are you ready for the NEXT 50 issues!? :)

Florian: Thanks for your insight on controversy in SW fanfiction. Of course, some would argue that any sexual content is in and of itself, automatically controversial because Lucas so obviously downplayed this motivation in the trilogy. And he worked with sexual symbolism as well. I'm thinking of the Leia in her cell on the Death Star scene, which was a symbolic rape, don't you think? For the next trilogy, I think we'll just have to accept that he's going to make a PG or PG-13 rated series and that's it. Thank God for *Garbage*! :)!

And speaking of the "canon Anakin" who will be presented next year, I'm looking forward to it. Hopefully his history will be at least as coherent and logical as many

of the fanwriters have concocted, some of which are very good.

I'm going to try and talk my co-editor, Cheryl Pryor into hosting a wake in one of our rooms after our "mock funeral" for fannish Vader and Anakins. (No formal attire required, but black would be most appropriate.) Veronica Wilson has been coerced into doing the eulogy, maybe we can talk you and Nancy Stasulis into contributing to this somber ceremony as well? And anyone else who wants to kick in their two cents' worth, let us know.

Schuller: Do you think a major rift in fandom is possible? I missed the Ford/Luke controversy of the past, thank the Force. I'm aware of some "disagreements" between certain fans, but I haven't seen any major splitting up of the fandom in the past five years or so that I've been involved. It's possible that brand-new fans, brought into the trilogies with the new prequels will have entirely new perspectives, ideas and writing interests than we "oldsters." But new blood is a good thing, I think and I'm looking forward to reading and hearing what they have to say. As Judith Klinger pointed out, there may be a group of Anakin fans who have little interest in the Vader personae. Maybe someone will develop more on Yoda's character or the Liam Neeson Jedi Master character or Beru or who knows what. Should be interesting...

Pat Grant: Several people have mentioned the possibility of a bus ride to a theater to see the new movie together at MediaWest next year. Frankly, I think that Lori and Gordon have more than enough on their plate in managing the Con. Maybe you know of someone who is local that could put the trip together? Someone... named... Pat perhaps?? :)

And I appreciate your comments about not being online. When I attended a small, local con here last month, it seemed *everyone* was on-line and had Net access and that's where they did most of their fannish activities — writing and posting stories, talking in chat rooms, emailing back and forth. Now there were some zine-types there as well, but the majority of the attendees were definitely using their computer for fannish interaction.

I now have email access, thanks to MJ Mink and Judy Yuenger, bless them, but I've not upgraded enough for Internet access. I will someday, but I do feel a little left out, and wonder if I'm missing something "juicy" on the Net, whether fanfiction, websites or chat rooms.

Kim Percherski: Thanks for the compliments on our zine. We were very proud of #2, and thrilled at the positive response we got from fanwriters. We hope you enjoy it and please LOC, so the writers will get some feedback on their hard work. Shameless groveling always appreciated.

Like you, I share some concerns that fandom will become almost totally net-oriented. (See above, as well.)

The hard-core among us will never want to give up the convenience, artistry and tangible effort involved with producing a zine, which is much more than just a hard copy. Besides, if Net fiction is your only outlet for reading and writing, what do you do when the power goes off???

Tina Bentrup: It was so fabulous meeting you at MediaWest this year, glad you could make it! I've lost your email address, so send a post once more so I can file it properly. Been inspired to write some more stories or draw more cute cartoons??

To everyone: Which story ideas and plotlines would you like to see developed in the future? Marti Schuller suggested one about Vader's pov during his battle with Luke on the Death Star. What else needs to be told? Yoda's pov re: Anakin and Kenobi?, Kenobi and Luke? Was Yoda aware that Kenobi was planning to train Luke and did he approve, given Kenobi's history with Anakin? How much did Yoda really know about Palpatine; had they ever met? fought? What were Yoda's plans for Leia?

As Judith Klinger mentioned, I think everyone will have a different take on the prequels. We have such a diverse group of writers and artists, that whatever Lucas comes up with for the movies, can only be enhanced by the talented fen of *Star Wars*. I'm almost as excited to read the new stories inspired by the sequels as I am to see them.

'Til next time!

THE PHANTOM MENACE

Z. P. Florian
6214 Waterway Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22044

Well, this is it. The Prequel is on the horizon, for real. It even has a title, *The Phantom Menace*, whatever that is. All of us, who write Anakin stories agree, that even if there will be a *canon* Anakin, we'll keep ours anyway... Unless, the *canon* Anakin will be so good that we'll adopt him...

Cowan: I don't know if there's a Buffy zine. All I know in that genre is the *Forever Knight* zines. Those are usually good. I hope Buffy doesn't make you abandon the SW fandom as it had happened to M.J. Mink, a grave loss....

Crotty: Re "Poor Lando and Chewbacca never returned from this awful place." I think that sentence shows that Threepio was kept in the dark about Luke's rescue plans, unlike Artoo, who was a part of it. Threepio was not an accomplished Rebel like Artoo, who was obviously able to hack computer networks, cut ropes with his saw, blow fog, shock someone with an electric charge, throw a lightsaber to a Jedi. Anyone ever wrote about Artoo, how he became such a splendid Rebel agent?

Steyn: That Space Opera inspired Catherine Churko to

do that drawing, I hope one day it'll be a stage design in the Metropolitan Opera, but please, not Wagner, if possible. Get that other guy to do the songs, you know, Gounod, is he still around? He did a good job with the libretto of your compatriot, Goethe, the Faust thing. Seriously, Anakin was always a space Faust for me.

Schuller: I don't think the new movie will cause a major rift in the fandom. Change, maybe but not a rift. I can't see us screaming at each other like: "No way! The Emperor cannot be Luke's grandfather!" We might argue but we won't drift apart over such things.

Klinger: Yes, the new generation will start watching the saga with the first movie. How interesting that will be for them. But how much more interesting is it for us, who do it backwards. By the way, I couldn't agree more. Yes, the Force is a life energy, the kind of birth-and-death thing, and how about the idea that the Dark Side is not some living entity, but a Jedi technology to harness the aggressive energies, while the Light Side is the technology of using the calmly floating energies. Then again, it can always be considered as the concept of good and evil, depending on how we interpret Vader being "saved" as in "redeemed and going to heaven". The angelic trio's appearance would point to that.

Pecherski: Re first loc... Now you've done it, the second doesn't hurt at all. Yeah, so where did Leia get that great dark hair? I always went for a dark Anakin, with intense blue eyes. Why do a second Luke (one blond for the Saga isn't enough)? What had happened with tall dark, handsome, unpredictable and mysterious?

Fanzines won't become extinct any more than books. Ok, maybe books will be replaced by electronic readers, about the size of a book, but not scrolling ones, but the kind that displays a page at a time. Books are designed to be perfect for a human being.

Bentrup: Yes, I found the missing six breasts. They were on the other side of the display in the other setup. (For those who weren't at MWC, this is about the doll show.)

Churko: I said this in my letter privately, but I must say (scream) this now in public, THANKS FOR THE DRAWING!!!! I've been spoiled with drawings this year, Nancy Stasulis did that Yoda with Z.P.'s face drawing and you the opera! What more can I ask for? Both of the drawings are on my walls (yes, at home and in the office too!)

To all: Yes, there's more slash at MWC than ever before, not just in the dealers room, in the art show, but in the zines as well. I think it reflects a kind of natural fatigue, after so many years in a fandom. Almost everything been done, and anything new seems worth exploring. Oh, and perhaps another aspect is that the slash stories offer a lot of suspense because we don't know how it'll end, while Han

and Leia's bonding is a given. Also, there have been quite a few very good slash stories that inspired others to try something similar or write a sequel. What the no-slash part of the fandom needs is a few explosive stories about the straight relationships (Han and Leia, Luke and a woman) that'd bring a renaissance into those stories. Let's explore the girls in Luke's future and see whatever can be written about Han and Leia that was not done yet. On the other hand, just because I've eaten chocolate before, it doesn't mean I won't want to eat it again.

SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT

Debbie Kittle
11521 Idlewood Rd.
Silver Spring, MD 20906

Oct. 12, 1998

I have to say issue 50 was fantastic! I loved the color vidcaptures that you used, Cheree. Really brightened it up. And I enjoyed putting faces to names but was hoping to see more bios. Maybe for issue 100? :)

By this time most folks should know the name Lucas bestowed upon Episode 1. It's "The Phantom Menace."

Not anything I was anticipating reading but the titles of the original trilogy have always reflected the films so I have no doubt this will as well. But it is rather intriguing so am anxious to see how George puts it all together.

In case, no one was aware, the SW Exhibit at the Air and Space Museum has been extended until January 31, 1999 so that should give everyone a little more time to get there but it is going to tour 7 cities after that but no info at this time on where and when.

And a new CD ROM has been released by LucasArts called "Behind the Magic" and has some previously unseen scenes from the Cantina and the missing Biggs scenes.

Matthew: Glad you're enjoying being online and surfing. I don't mind talking on the phone but hate long distance phone bills.

A. G.: Love those extra pants lines you added!!

Tina: It was so good to have dinner with you, Dan, Jennifer Moore, Liz Sharpe and Nancy Stasulis on 10/1. I had a really great time!

Catherine: I enjoyed the *X Files* movie, did you? Sorry I couldn't make World Con. As far as I know there is no website that has our photos from the Exhibit.

I hope all is well with everyone and guess this would be the time to wish one and all a great Holiday and Snowy Season! :) Fly Casual As Always.

HYPOCHONDRIAC DROIDS

Judith Klinger
Scheffelstr. 1
10367 Berlin
Germany
email: jklinger@rz.uni-potsdam.de

October 10, 1998

What a lovely 50th issue — I enjoyed reading everyone's bios very much, and the color inserts were an extra treat. Cheree, I definitely hope you'll never find a "convenient place to stop"! Congratulations, and thank you for doing all the work while the rest of us can have all the fun. I absolutely agree that this fandom stands out for its tolerance, and I'm sure it's going to stay that way, whether or not we have divided opinions on the prequels. I look forward to hearing everyone's views on them already.

Z. P. Florian: Yes, down with the pumped-up Rambo Luke! It's a relief that Kenner has changed those action figures back to something actually resembling a human being with nice proportions. Now to get an intelligent look on his face, and I'll stop complaining.

I'm sure that droids designed to process the complex data muddles that humans constantly produce are also able to learn and expand their own response options. Protocol droids like Threepio in particular should be able to adopt the habits of non-mechanical species. Even if they can't actually experience pain, absorbing the reactions of sentients might ultimately lead to an automated reflex of the same kind. Just think about it ... a galaxy full of hypochondriac droids. :)

Well, once the prequels have been released, I think our perception of the original trilogy is going to be affected the most where Vader is concerned. And not just in terms of learning his reasons for turning to the Dark Side. We'll be familiar with the face and the body behind the mask and armor, and I'm sure that this sense of his humanity will make a great difference in looking at Vader. At the same time, it's going to eliminate much of the mystery and the potential for a multitude of fantasies attached to it. For about five minutes...

Matthew Whitney: Oh dear, a lot of what you wrote about the rearrangements at your school sounds awfully familiar. Glad they're keeping you on staff — Congratulations.

About Tatooine: Well, *Luke* thinks it's the most unimportant place in the galaxy, but he may be wrong. (His standards, at that point, are those of a bored teenager, after all.) Maybe Tatooine has a hidden Jedi tradition of which Luke has never heard, or perhaps its political/economical

insignificance can from a certain point of view present an advantage. For someone like Jabba, it provides an easily controllable environment while being suitably inconspicuous. Besides, in addition to a weak spot for Tatooine farmboys, I love deserts and look forward to a visual tour of the place.

On a related subject: if Anakin grew up on Tatooine, why did Luke's guardians (Ben, I presume) feel he'd be especially safe there? If Anakin ever found out he had children, that's where he could be expected to look first. Was this part of a hide-in-plain-sight strategy? I hope this doesn't mean Anakin lost his memory when he became Vader...

Don't let us stop you from developing your theories about the Force, please — I certainly wouldn't mind hearing more about it. Not that I have a clue regarding the nature of fractals, but I like the idea of currents or eddies in the Force. Wouldn't that suggest a spatial organization, a link to certain places? (Hey, why not Tatooine?) But perhaps it could also explain the difference between energy in its most general form and the Force. Any ideas about that?

Cheree: Yes, definitely, once the novelty has worn off, slash or any other sexually explicit material isn't exciting unless combined with plot, character development, or any other element a good story usually needs.

Lisa Cowan: I don't think we're having a serious disagreement about whether or not the prequels will be part of Lucas's canon... But for me, raising that question is just another way of saying that the concept of canon doesn't really come into my enjoyment of SW. I'm sure Lucas himself has changed his mind about the prequels and the storyline a dozen times or more since the release of the original trilogy, not least because the SFX possibilities have changed so much since then.

Marti Schuller: No, don't go into self-mortification here. It's not that you dislike sharing in general. :) I don't think any of us minds the attention SW receives from fans, but what bothers me sometimes is the deluge of merchandise, and the way it introduces people to the SW universe. (Like when those hyper-muscled action figures hit the stores, and I watched kids buying them, I did feel tempted to walk up to them and tell them that Luke really, really doesn't look like that. :) Nowadays, the path to the movies seems cluttered with toys and books etc., and some of it really is inferior to the movies. Okay, I can ignore that, but it's kind of startling to see an article about Mara Jade (who?) and her fan following in the *SW Insider*... Well, here's your old purist speaking. Obviously, the fandom has become more diversified, and the toy collectors have a totally different approach to the SW universe, compared to the fan writers.

Tim Blaes: Yes, those lost-scene stills in the *SW Insider*

were certainly worth it. So while we're talking of merchandising tactics, is Lucas ever going to reinsert those missing bits to market an Extra-Special Edition? Or maybe add those scenes in a video/laserdisc package? I'd buy *that* at once.

Anybody: I've heard there's a CD ROM out which is supposed to contain some of the lost footage. Is that true?

Kim Pecherski: Hi, and welcome. :) I share your mixed feelings about the ongoing commercial exploitation. Must admit I can't help feeling that some of the merchandise replaces the magic and complexities of the movies with a rather crude image of the SW universe. Not that I mind all this stuff being available, I just wonder about the impression it creates sometimes.

Have to keep it short this time, as mundane work is pressing in from all sides, but I look forward to reading you all in the next issue.

WHAT IS CANON?

Tim Blaes
425 Dermid Circle
Hendersonville, NC 28792

Congrats on issue #50! The color portions were interesting, but I was hoping for color versions of the regular mastheads. ((Ed: *That would be a good trick since the regular mastheads are in black and white.*)) Looking at the bio-sheets I had to wince a little, noticing how much better educated the majority of SE's readers are than I. What are your plans for issue 75? ((Ed: *To cover the release of Chapter 9.*))

Z. P. Florian: If Leia was subjected to psychological suffering on Bespin, perhaps she was forced to observe Han on the scan grid? That wouldn't account for the change in clothing, though, or her relatively unscathed demeanor. Was Vader already softening and decided to spare her, or was he just unsuccessful at pushing her buttons?

A Han/S. Crumb story would be less controversial than just gross.

How will the first trilogy change how we look at the ones we've seen already? Events, choices, and relationships are bound to be compared and contrasted. An outside example would be if you had been introduced to *Babylon 5* in the middle of its run, then went back to watch it from the first episode on. By the time you caught up, you'd need to re-watch the remaining episodes again with a new perspective.

Lisa Cowan: Glad to see another Buffy fan out there. Sorry, I don't have any clipping or magazine articles to send you, but I hope you picked up *Femme Fatales* Vol. 7

#6 with the cover feature on the "Babes of Buffy". Speaking of babes, Sarah Michell Gell is attractive, but it's Willow (Alyson Hannigan) who floats my boat. Being smart and just a little odd is a winning combination with me, and with those eyes and that smile, I just want to hug her & love her & take her home & feed her chocolate.

For a slightly obscure cross universe idea, I'd like to see *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* meet *Devil Hunter Yohko*. The latter is from a Japanese animates series about another schoolgirl slayer of the supernatural. You can probably check it out at your local Blockbuster video store. Since Buffy's grades are probably not up to snuff, Yohko would probably have to be the exchange student.

A. G. Steyn: Nothing nasty about it! Steve Martin has done a number of straight dramatic roles, and even his comedy has come a long way from that ice cream suit & the arrow through the head. I just wish you could see the Enya video I was talking about; Martin and Ford even brood the same way.

Marti Schuller: When a fandom goes from being a "pond" to an "ocean" perhaps that's the time to go deep sea fishing. There was a time when I would have said that we can't have too many fans, but not all those "fans" will be around long term, after the movie/TV show is out of prominence. Those sort of "fans" are just in the way.

Judith Klinger: With the royalties policy of Bantam, I doubt that Carrie Fisher will be doing a SW novel anytime soon, and that's a shame. Assuming she'd really want to do one, just how much could she get away with? It might be too different and overshoot the target readers Bantam is aiming at. It might even over-shoot *us*.

I'm not sure "canon" has any meaning for SW anymore. If Lucas can change, not just add to, the movies that have been important to me for over 20 years, what can I be sure of? What is "base line"? The issue is so muddy that we fans should just use whatever we want and leave the rest. That's pretty much what we do anyway.

In my readings of such matters, I've heard tell of "evil trees", and the land itself can be soured. What strikes me about that scene is that despite a reference to a tree, I can't distinguish one clearly. It seems Luke entered some sort of shattered cellar. Did the tree grow up out of an abandoned dwelling?

I seem to recall an incident where a Lucasfilm rep informed a zine ed that in the SW universe, even the Imperials, were too "innocent" to be gay.

Pat Grant: We could save ourselves the bus fare (which was more than the movie the time we went together to see ROTJ) and form our own caravan to see Episode One.

I'd love to see Mark Hamill, and any number of other people, in an SF version of *Politically Incorrect*.

Actually, I think a case could be made that Pinky and the Brain have been doing more than just planning to take

over the world every night. "Are you pondering what I'm pondering, Pinky?" "I think so, Brain, but where are we going to find a pair of rubber underpants this time of night?"

Kim Pecherski: It would seem that Luke was blond in ANH due to exposure to Tatooine's twin suns, and perhaps some other enviornmental influence in TESB. Young Anakin, it seems, will have spent some time on Tatooine also. In the other two movies his hair may darken as Luke's did.

It seems to me that your Barbie scenario has Darth being seduced by the Pink Side of the Force! Now *that* is a ghastly thought! By any chance did you see the brief attempt at a Barbie cartoon show? It had her flying around the galaxy in a pink space shuttle. Somebody must have been trip'n on acid when they produced that one.

Tina Bentrup: I always thought the labels on Vader's breast plate were "Rewind ... Play ... Fast Forward."

Catherine Churko: The *X-Files* movie was okay, but 85% could have been a regular episode. I wish the Lone Gunmen had been given more than a cameo. I love those guys.

I haven't seen the new photos of the Face on Mars but you should keep in mind that, unlike the Moon, Mars has an atmosphere and weather that *could* have altered the geography to *some* extent. But even with higher resolution, if the image no longer retains the established bilateral symmetry then I can't help but suspect a cover-up.

Speaking of the Moon, our satellite has quite a number of interesting, NASA-supressed features that rank right up there with the D&M pyramid; domes, bridges, "castles," and superstructures of glass or crystal rising improbably high above the lunar plains. Even if you dismiss such as faulty interpretation of data (WARNING: Double-Standards Ahead!) square craters are harder to blow a raspberry at.

Government interference isn't all I'm concerned about. Remember the two probes the Russians sent to investigate the Martian moon Phobos, whose odd orbital acceleration has led to speculation it is hollow, artificially constructed, or both? The first probe just vanished, the second allegedly destroyed by a meteorite. Before its destruction, however, the second probe relayed a number of "quite remarkable" photos, including a cigar shaped shadow cast on Phobos from an orbit beyond the probe. The Soviets have not publicly released the very last photo transmitted, and it reportedly contains "sensitive information". Gee, I wonder what they mean by that?



REVISIONIST HISTORY

Pat Grant

2343 N. Cedar St., Apt. A
Holt, MI 48842-2154

September 28, 1998

Greetings! Wow, last issue was really great! I enjoyed reading all the bios. I did discover, though, in reading through them there were lots of things I left out of mine. Such as when I read all the people who claimed they came into fandom through Tolkien and I hadn't even mentioned it! Of course, I was the opposite of most in that I was a *Star Trek* fan from "day one" in 1967 and did not discover Tolkien until college, 1972 or 73. But the first club I was in was at college and was a Tolkien club which we called "The Council of Elrond."

I also forgot to mention a few other major interests and was glad to see others list them: *Xena*, *Hercules*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Can't wait until Angel's spinoff series starts next year (fall 1999)!

Skyler Walker: Hi! It's been a long time — in fact I think I was still living in Cincinnati, OH when I met you. Hope you have been well. Too bad, though, that you don't get *Xena*. And I did the same thing with *Babylon 5* that you did, only I dissed it for just the first year. Then I caught an episode early on in the 2nd season and I was hooked!

Z. P. Florian: You are absolutely right about C3PO being kept in the dark about the mission because of his big mouth and tendency toward cowardice. And if they were to reprogram him around those faults, it just wouldn't be 3PO anymore, and besides I think even that would make him short circuit, having his paranoia in check!

I also think you have a viable explanation for 3PO's use of "Thank the Maker." My only question is, didn't someone else (human) use that term during the movies? Leia, maybe? I thought I remembered someone else saying it, but I can't really remember. Oh, darn, now I'll have to go rewatch the movies again to refresh my memory. :)

Regarding the torture in Cloud City, I agree, Chewie was tortured. And I never really caught the fact that Leia had changed clothes! Of course, there could be any number of reasons for this. We don't know how long the torture lasted, so it could have just been the next day and she had changed clothes as a matter of daily routine. Or it could be as you surmise. Or if she was tortured, her outfit may have been damaged and they let her change. But I feel as you do, the suffering of Luke's friends was always in the plural, and I don't think that would only apply to Han and Chewie, and not Leia also.

You said Luke joining Palpatine would be impossible and not the Saga, unless someone comes up with a viable alternate that explains why Palpie is the good guy and everyone else is mistaken about him. Well, I wouldn't change the trilogy for anything (well, maybe a couple of things in ROTJ ...) but how about this as a premise... We all know that the victors write the history books and the Alliance won out in the end. We were told that the trilogy was being told through the eyes of the droids (programmed by the good guys). Perhaps Palpatine was a victim of history, similar to Richard III — Richard having gone down in history as a deformed, hunchbacked bad-guy. More recently a lot has come to light to prove he was not deformed or hunchbacked, and there is no real evidence that he was ever mean or cruel. Perhaps the Emperor really was working to unite and organize the Galaxy and would have done a great job at it but the rebels wanted the Old Republic back (remember, the Old Republic had been corrupted by this time) and so they declared war on the established government. How do we know they didn't cause some of the atrocities and make it look like the Empire did it? This has been done in history. It all boils down to the fact that there are always two sides and we were only seeing one. No, I don't believe this version myself, but I think it is a viable argument.

I like your idea for a funeral for fandom's Anakins at MWC next year. Why not expand this? Let's hold a full-fledged wake for all our creations which will "die" upon the opening of the movie ... all the "mothers" of Luke and Leia, all the young Anakins and Bens, and all the characters we've created who had anything to do with this period of time and are now obsolete. I know some of you come to the dance on Friday night in the cantina. We could have it double as a wake. Perhaps those who have such characters could bring (or send us) a sheet with a few paragraphs about the character, list the publication(s) it was in, and include a drawing if available. We could post these somewhere in the cantina along with a funeral wreath or something. Let me know if you like the idea and we'll mention it in the FOE newsletter, too.

Lisa Cowan: Regarding Buffy zines, I think there was one or two either at MWC last year or advertised there. Unfortunately, I had no extra spending money this year, so steered clear of fanzines lest I go crazy! I'll keep my eyes open for anything and let you know what I run across.

Gasp! The new prequels aren't being considered as canon by some? I agree, they are from the mind and creativity of George Lucas. This *makes* them canon. Doesn't it? As for the novelizations, I don't know. It just seems to me, IMO, that the novelizations should be considered as canon because they *are* the same story with just some things added in. A lot of this could be things Lucas wanted in the story, but didn't have time to get it all

into 2 hours and this is his way of getting the whole story to us. And I believe that the movie novelizations, much more so than any other SW fiction novels out there, while not written by Lucas, must surely go under his scrutiny before publication. I'm sure if there was any element he didn't approve of, it would be eliminated from the book.

Matthew Whitney: Congratulations on the master's degree! I enjoyed reading your comments on both the tree having a dark side and on the planets' climates. I think you are probably right and this is a problem with shorthand language, as you call it. And Cheree is also right about the plains and mountains of Endor. Have any fan writers set any stories on any planets already used in the movies, and given a different area with a different climate? The only one I think would be pretty much as is would be Hoth. If it had a nicer, warmer area, wouldn't the rebels have set up base there instead of in the frozen part? And you're right, it did come across as very Flash Gordonish. Not that that's a bad thing ... just not quite 3-dimensional.

Everyone: Before I forget, I'm looking for something I'm hoping someone out there knows about. I'm a big fan of Alan Rickman, and now have all but two of his movies on videotape. These are *An Awfully Big Adventure* and *Mesmer*. I have not been able to find these two and Sun Coast Video tells me they don't think *Mesmer* was ever released on video. But it may have at some time run on some cable channel, so I'm looking for anyone who might have either movie and be capable of making a copy — I'll be glad to send blank tapes and pay for all postage. Or at the very least, does anyone know of any business that specializes in hard-to-find movies?

Cheryl Pryor: A belated comment on your dilemma. Yes, go ahead and print the artwork. I had the same dilemma once with our newsletter cover. I came across a piece of artwork which had been submitted long before. I had originally rejected it because what they sent me was a light pencil sketch. I had written back and asked the artist to ink the original, or to make a copy and ink it, and then resubmit it, but he/she never did. The artist also did not put their name on the piece of art. I was needing artwork for a cover and decided to see if I could make this piece of art printable. So, I made as clear a copy of it as possible (it was fairly light), then inked it myself and filled in the cape area with black marker (it had been shaded in, in pencil). Not knowing who the artist was or if they were still in the club or not, I went ahead and used it, along with a note about it on the second page, stating that the artist was unknown and that if anyone knew who it was, they should let me know and the artist would get full credit. I didn't think the artist would object. After all, it *had* been submitted for the newsletter. Just make a similar note stating that credit will be given where credit is due as soon as you learn who to give the credit to!

Marti Schuller: You mentioned that you fear anything that could cause a major rift in the fandom. I think most of us fear that, many of us having lived through such rifts in Trekdom and especially in Dr. Who fandom. I just hope that we have all come to learn that opinions are just that... opinions. Nobody should get overly upset at someone else because of an opinion. Most of the time when I put my ideas to voice or to pen I am only putting forth my own opinion, and anyone can tell you that I can be quite opinionated. But I will be the first to tell you that I am not necessarily right and I love to hear alternative opinions. Some people need to learn to take themselves less seriously, and that it can be quite educational for people to discuss their opinions. Sometimes you learn to see things from another viewpoint and it broadens your own perspective. Other times you just need to learn to agree to disagree and leave it at that. No opinion is worth tearing fandom apart for. ((Ed: *Let's especially remember the Church of Ford/Cathedral of Luke War and vow that "those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."* Never again!))

Re: SW fandom once again belonging to one and all... Yes, everything you said made perfect sense. But, there is one good thing about it. It sure is wonderful to have all the tons of SW stuff to buy again! Both the SW Monopoly game and the SW Trivial Pursuit games are beautiful and tremendous fun to play. I had the pleasure of being among the first in public to play the SW Trivial Pursuit game, as they introduced it at Origins over the 4th of July weekend, before it was released for sale. I signed up for every game. By the way, Dave Prowse, Jeremy Bulloch, and Phil Brown were at that convention and it was great seeing them. At one point I spied Dave walking around the open gaming area just watching everyone gaming and no convention security people in sight! I miss this type of convention. The pro-cons are taking over and they don't allow "wandering." I've heard that some of the actors feel the same way. Rumor has it that the *Babylon 5* producers have suggested their stars not sign up with Creation Con because they don't want to be restricted to them only. (Creation Con contracts are exclusive, not allowing the signee to attend any other conventions while under contract.) I don't know if that's true about the Bab 5 cast, or not, but if it is, it could be a good sign of things changing back to "the good old days." I must say it is good to see Dave, Jeremy, and other SW stars attending the more open policy cons again. ((Ed: *For those of you interested in a good ol' fashioned fan con, open to the public and with lots of guest stars, check out Stellar Occasion in Dallas, done by Phoenix Entertainment. They have a website (<http://www.cyberramp.net/~phoenix/index.html>) with their upcoming stuff. These cons are wonderful fun and we look forward to doing them. They have had mostly*

B5 guests recently but are eclectic. And the guests wander around, too. I looked up from my dealer's table one day last year to find Mira (DeLenn) Furlan standing hand-in-hand with my daughter! She was shopping for her nieces and nephews and bought some things from me!))

Judith Klinger: In regards to Kenobi addressing Vader as Darth, I've heard a rumor... actually someone claimed to have read this in the *Star Wars Insider* (which I don't get myself but occasionally read someone else's ...) that in the prequels we will learn that "Darth" is actually a title, not a name. But if that's true, then why the use of the title Lord also? I think in some countries they combine political titles with military titles, such as "Lord High Minister" or something like that. Maybe it's like that with "Darth." Personally, I hope they're wrong with this rumor. I like to think that Darth Vader is just a name he took when Anakin Skywalker "died." Or perhaps it is a name the Emperor bestowed upon him when he became Sith.

I agree with you that Anakin's fall to the dark side had a lot more behind it than a personal disappointment, no matter how strong that was. What I was trying to get at last time was that there are some people who could take the path he did for those reasons. Some people, called control freaks among other things, feel that they own their spouse and any sign of disobedience can and will set them off. People have been found guilty of murder with the only motive being marital infidelity. However, IMO, this will not be the case with Anakin. I'm not sure I think his marriage (or, relationship if not married) with Luke and Leia's mother will have much to do with his fall. I think we'll find he simply succumbed to the seduction of the dark side. But then again, by this time next year we should have even more pieces to the puzzle. As for why I'd prefer to have them married... well, chalk it up to my personal beliefs. Even though I myself am divorced, I still believe in the institution of marriage and hold very old-fashioned beliefs. Of course I know not everyone does, and I won't be disappointed or upset if it turns out they were not married. I would just prefer they were.

You talked about canon too, and I have to agree with what you said. I do consider Lucas' statements as being canon, and yet I know he has changed things several times, making things inconsistent, but in my understanding of the word "canon" means something that is official to the genre, and since Lucas is the creator of this universe if he creates something else in the universe, it is by its nature canon, and if he says something isn't canon, then it isn't. Any other views on this? As for the bits added to it by the actors, directors, etc., keep in mind that all these things had to pass Lucas' discretion each day in the dailies. If he didn't like something he would have had it cut and refilmed. Yes, they added things to it, but Lucas decided if it belonged or not.

Regarding the Force (and the dark side tree

discussions)... perhaps it's not a case of morality. If there was only The Force, and you became light side or dark side depending on how you use it, then it would be a case of morality. However, in the trilogy they refer to the Force itself as actually having a dark side and a light side, which would seem to indicate a difference in energies and nature. Same as the belief some have in the existence of good and evil as actual natures. If this is this case, then a darksider is that because he/she draws from this very powerful, yet corrupting force, while a lightsider draws from the more creative, positive energy force of the light side. This would also make the existence of the tree more understandable. Perhaps the Force can manifest itself in Galactic "lay lines" of sorts, and the tree exists where a couple or more Dark-Side of these intersect. You know, whatever the real answer to this turns out to be, it sure has turned into a fascinating discussion, hasn't it?

Tim Blaes: I don't get *Star Wars Insider* either. I borrow and read copies from others. But I am thinking about subscribing, even if it is about 65% merchandising... heck, even that is fun to look at!

And I still agree with you about the Face on Mars. Personally, I can't help wondering if there was a civilization there millions of years ago (or even longer) which did what we're doing and ruined their environment to the point of extinction. Or perhaps a major plague that wiped everyone out. Maybe Mars was hit by a gigantic meteor similar to what everyone fears will happen here. It could easily have buried everything. Just because it is unlivable now doesn't mean it always was. They claim it's not too different from Earth and could possibly be made Earth-like. Anyway, it's a fun mystery which I hope will possibly get solved within my lifetime. Hey, it could happen... we *could* see a manned mission to Mars within the next 20 years, and I *hope* I'm still alive then. And I hope they'll pick that location. It seems the most obvious place to find something.

Hey, I absolutely *love* your *She-Wolf of London/Buffy the Vampire Slayer* crossover idea with Randi & Oz as were-relatives. I'd love to see someone write that one!

Kim Pecherski: Glad to see you in the pages of SE! *Toy Fare*? Never heard of it, you've been holding out on me! Is this a comic? Sounds hilarious! You'll have to bring a few issues next time we get together!

Don't worry... I don't think that fanzines will become extinct unless we get to the point where paper become a rare commodity. At least, I hope not. They're too much fun!

Tina Bentrup: It was great to hear about Dan's new job and I'm glad things are looking up for you.

Regarding the idea of getting a big group together at MWC and going to the movie by bus, I've written to Lori about that and also about a couple other things, but I've

heard nothing back from her. From what I hear nobody's heard anything from her about anything since Media, and I know several people who have written her about different things.

Catherine Churko: I would *love* to see your drawing of "Mrs. Skywalker" holding Leia. Has anyone heard if we'll see anything of Alderaan in this prequel trilogy? I hope so!

One last item to everyone: Everything official I've seen or heard listed Tuesday, May 25 as the opening date for the 1st prequel. The *Star Wars Insider* apparently made a big deal about this being the first movie in history to open on a Tuesday. But now someone has contacted our club stating that we have the date wrong and that it will be opening on Friday, May 21. This person is usually right about things. Anyone know for sure?

AWESOME!

Tina Inge Bentrup
5325 Browns Gap Poad
Knoxville, TN 37918

Just got back from a late September vacation that ranged from the beaches of North Carolina to the mountains of West Virginia, including a stopover in Washington DC to see the *Star Wars* exhibit at the Smithsonian (more nose-prints on the glass!) and to have dinner the same evening with a delegation of Dead Bothans (Debbie Kittle, Liz Sharpe, Jennifer Moore, and Nancy Stasulis). What a delightful day! The SW exhibit was awesome, just seeing those costumes and props. To my surprise, I enjoyed the models of the *Executor* and the *Millenium Falcon* almost more than the costumes. The detail work was just amazing. I found the headset kind of annoying, but I loved it when James Earl Jones (the narrator) gave Darth a big send-up as "the greatest villain of all time ... if I do say so myself!" The gift shop was just as large and took up just as much time as the exhibit. We bought the Williams score, the "Magic of Myth" exhibit guidebook, the "Annotated Screenplays," the 1999 calendar (Darth Vader Reveals Anakin Skywalker), and a set of 3 "big little" Trilogy books for children. I really wanted the \$6,000 Vader costume, but Dan said no.

One of the things we discussed with the Dead Bothans that evening was the title of the first prequel, which had just been revealed on the SW homepage: "The Phantom Menace." We all agreed that this title absolutely SUCKS, and were praying that its just another case of "Blue Harvest," and the real title will be better. I mean, "phantom menace" is just about the vaguest word combo

I can think of, other than "foggy illusion" or "ghostly mirage." Thanks to Debbie Kittle for organizing the get together and choosing such a splendid restaurant (Timpano in Rockville, MD). Long live the Dead Bothan Society!

Cheree: Congratulations on the 50th issue of this great letterzine! It certainly has made a difference in MY life, and brought me into the fold of SW fandom. Your opening essay was so well-written, a really clear and concise history of SE, and your call to SW fen to look to the future was very well put. Hear, hear!

Enjoyed "The Emperor's Advocate" essay. Was there a proceedings of Mythcon XIV that one could buy? ((Ed: Check with Lisa Cowan on this. She sent me the five essays from Mythcon.))

LOVED the top 10 ways to end SW early. My favorite was Uncle Owen giving the droids a memory flush himself. Also loved the Copacabana filk. Is there a tape of this? Now I gotta learn just how that tune goes so I can sing it in the shower. ((Ed: Send me a cassette and a buck or so for postage and I'll copy it and mail it back to you. You'll love it. It's hilarious! And thanks to Matthew Whitney for this lovely piece of insanity!))

I am really pissed I didn't get my bio in on time. Story of my life. But I loved reading about all of you. What a diverse group we are, occupation-wise. I'm struck by how many of us are involved with animals. Also art, teaching, law, computers. Even the IRS! Deep moles in the bowels of the Empire ... maybe there's hope after all!

Judy Y.: I loved the STAR aWARDs this year. You were a lovely Mon Mothma. That picture of Z. P. as Yoda was a hoot, but now that we know Z. P. is really a droid, Nancy Stasulis is going to have to do another cartoon!!!

Belea: Did you really name your dog "Gator"? Well, I love you anyway. I just have to pass on my favorite Southern joke here:

Q. How many Southerners does it take to change a light-bulb?

A. Three. One to change the light-bulb, and the other two to talk about how much better the old one was ...

Z.P.: What an interesting point you raise about Leia's change of costume in TESB. Stripped of her clothes and displayed in front of a dozen Stormtroopers? And then what did they say, "You can get dressed now"?

Looking at the "Old Trilogy" in a new light, you invite speculation. For one thing, I think we'll gain a new appreciation of what Luke accomplishes by turning Vader back. I think we'll appreciate the true meaning of the title "A New Hope" when we see how black things will look at the end of Episode 3. We're certain to get a whole new perspective on Obi-Wan. Sure, he made some bad mistakes and probably almost foundered under the guilt, but managed to survive with his sanity intact just long enough to point young Luke in the right direction, or what

he thought was the right direction. (And didn't it turn out to be the right direction, after all?) Most of all, I think we're going to learn a lot about the Jedi "the way they were."

Your call for a funeral of fannish Anakins lights up my imagination. I can imagine a symbolic burning of old manuscripts, perhaps. Maybe on a funeral pyre like Vader's armor, with the Jedi theme playing. What I regret most about the upcoming Trilogy is the loss of mystery. Vader was such an enigmatic character, revealing his humanity only in tiny increments. That's part of what made him so fascinating. I'm not sure I really want to know ALL about him!

Matthew W.: Great photo of you in medieval garb! Re the line "Poor Lando and Chewbacca never returned from this awful place," remember that the last thing we saw in TESB was Lando and Chewie flying off in the *Falcon*. "This awful place" could simply be a reference to Tatooine in general.

Judith Klinger: A footnote on Obi-Wan calling Vader "Darth." I'm told at least one character in the prequel cast list (online) named Darth-something (the one I remember is "Darth Maul"). This confirms what Fiorenzo told us in ish 49. If this is true, it might be some kind of title. Hasn't there been speculation that the name "Obi-Wan" might be a title? But then again, it could all be a dust-screen...

In re the discussion of evil trees, don't forget "Old Man Willow" in LOTR, or Mirkwood in *The Hobbit*. Almost all of Tolkien's trees are dark in some way.

Catherine Churko: What a neat picture of "Star Wars: The Opera." There's the chorus of Jedi chanting while Obi-Wan's ringing tenor rises above the weird dirge, the heroine (soprano) shrieking piteously from the balcony, as Anakin (bass-baritone) strides off stormily to his destiny, stage right. Wow!

No, we're not familiar with the glass kits you described. Since Dan got a job, the stained-glass project has kind of gone by the board.

Kim Pecherski: It was you, it WAS you! Of course I forgot your name and lost the piece of paper I had it written down on, but I'll never forget how much fun we had. I think we ought to hit Lord Vader up for a raise, don't you? We can discuss this in the Cantina next year...

You picked up the Vader with the removable helmet? Oooh, you're as bad as I am. Dan got me one where he's sitting inside his meditation chamber which closes up and looks like the Death Star on the outside. I would never have bought it myself, because I feel the same way you do about the explosion of merchandising; but I'm certainly not going to take it back... ((Ed: Wait until you see what I have in store for Vader in his meditation chamber come MWC. Snicker ... snicker ... and I'm working on Yoda and the flying critter, too... By the way — here comes the

shameless commercial announcement — if anyone is looking for anything in particular, toy-wise, remember that Randy and I have a collectibles biz on the side and, if we don't have it, we'll try to find it for you! Just let me know! Okay, end of commercial.))

I wouldn't really call Jake Lloyd a blond-blond. Sort of a dark blond. It could go either way. Loved your LOC and hope you'll write many more! But that Darkside Barbie was too much. Hot pink lightsaber with built-in makeup compartment!

Cheree, Pat Grant, Debbie Kittle: It was great to BE back! And we're coming back next year, too. If the Force is willin' and the crick don't rise.

Laugh it up, fuzzballs...

NITPICKING

A. G. Steyn
Paul-Ruecker-St. 69
D - 47059 Duisburg
Germany

September 18th, 1998

First of all: congratulations, Cheree for 15 years of *Southern Enclave*! That's 15 years of putting up with a bunch of weirdoes. Just how in the world did you manage to keep your sanity with us around??? ((Ed: By being insane to have even started this thing!))

Nice to get some inside scoop on a bunch of you fellow LoCers — but: where's the rest of the garbage? Marie, Z.P., Ming, Gerald... all of you???

By the way: I LOVE (!!!) your self portraits (mug shots), Nancy.

On a personal note: I would like to thank everyone tasteless and nice enough to vote in favor of my little Boba Fett vignette, allowing me to win the Star Award for Best Vignette at this year's MWC. It was quite a surprise, especially since this was something done "on the run" (i.e., thrown together in a hurry and without much thought).

Saw a documentary on the Knights Templar. Interesting fact: during the purge, the last of the Templars fled from their castle on the island of Mallorca on two ships, one of which was called "The Falcon"! No further comment...

Took Mom to see *6 Days, 7 Nights*. Mom really liked it. Thought Anne Heche and HF did a very nice job. I cared less about Anne or other actors. What amused me were those undercover references to other HF movie roles. Especially Han/Indy. The scene where Anne Heche's character arrives at the "airport" and sees the plane ... And how proudly "Quinn/Han" presents his fancy flying machine to her ... Priceless. (Uh, I think I should rephrase

that!) There's this little blue-eyed blonde staring open-mouthed at a dilapidated, oil-leaking piece of junk, and there's the cocky, overbearing pilot played by Harrison Ford... Excuse me, but I was rolling on the floor.

Needless to say that the jungle trip (the fall into the crack when the earth opened, the "battle" in the bushes when Quinny tried to take a pit-stop) was vintage Indy, and brought tears of laughter to my eyes.

SW Literature: Most of you will have by now bought and read the book *Star Wars — the Magic of Myth* (compendium to the SW exhibition at the Smithsonian). So, let's have your opinions on that tome. Mine? Overall quality: good. Pictures are very nice. Print is clear. I do have to nitpick when it comes to the contents of this fine piece of literature, tho.

Aside from the fact that the Imperial uniforms do seem to resemble the Japanese uniforms of WWII rather than the German ones of WWI, it must be pointed out that the GeStaPo was *not identical* with the black clad "Death Head Squad" of the SS (one of the 5 different subdivisions of the SS). GeStaPo means Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police), an equivalent of the KGB, the STASI (Staatssicherheit = State Security) of GDR ill-fame, the CI5 and the CIA. No Secret Service man would ever get it in his head to run around in an extremely eye-catching uniform with a very unique emblem! I mean, how "top secret" would a guy be who could be recognized at a glance as an agent? We Germans may be weird and difficult to understand at times, humorless and vicious, too — but we are not nearly as moronic as Hollywood and associates obviously want the world to believe.

The Star Wars Insider poll for Best Loved SW Character: EGAD! Not one single itsy-bitsy vote for Aunt Beru ... but Mara Jade hogging the #20 spot? C'mon, folks. April Fool's Day is over. Anyway, judging from who landed in what place it's clear that either the Pampers generation (8 - 14 year old boys) stuffed the ballot box ... or the older girls (ages 18 and up) let their hormones decide over who would be "king". (And in the latter case, it looks like the actors behind the characters had a significant influence on the decision).

And before anyone out there in the cheap rows of the theater starts voicing a suspicion: *it's not my fault*. I did *not* vote. So if you hate Han and Boba coming in first and second — sue someone else.

Hallmark ornaments X-mas 1998: Nice X-Wing. Tiny little Ewoks (cute — considering that they are Ewoks). Awful Leia (stiff as a board). Boba? Playing hard to get in all the stores but thanks to Marie Treleaven I located the Fett-meister in a store in Santa Rosa. And yes, Jeremy has one, too. Got it right after it came out.

Jeremy Bulloch: He recently asked me to help him promote his new TV project, *First Frontier*. He wants me

to keep nagging the people in charge (distributors, etc.) to please air the show in Germany etc., etc. So I started the worldwide campaign: SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BOUNTY HUNTER! Everyone out there, no matter where in the world you are: write to JB and inquire about the show. Sweetie needs your input, folks.

From Debbie Kittle comes the news that he will be at Chiller Con, New Jersey. Those of you who get to go there (lucky you!): give him a hug and greetings from me.

Z. P. Florian: Loved your explanation regarding droids. Makes sense. Artoo's programming also indicates he's a Corellian model! (A rebellious "soul" and a tendency towards shady occupations — Han must love that little dustbin.)

Lisa Cowan: So, you actually think that "for once, SW fans in Europe are having all the fun and getting the big scoops"? Have I got news for you. Either you are talking about the Jupiter moon Europa — or Germany is not a part of Europe any more. Because I still feel as marooned now as I have for the last 20+ years when it comes to SW.

PS: Nice talking to you on the phone.

Matthew Whitney: So, you made it to the new building? And it's for certain that you get your Masters degree? Congrats! I cannot even fathom what it must be like to be a whiz at math, as I have always been a galloping failure at that subject. If we ever decide to play Pinky and the Brain, I will *not* play the Brain.

Uh.. PEZ dispensers? Darn, this means carnage. Boy, you're playing rough!

Pat Grant: I envy you. You got to see the boys *twice* this year already... and you actually ended up with a "Lt. Sheckil" photo? After reading this I told JB in my last letter that I expected him to reserve one for me, too. I'm greedy, I know!

Tim Blaes: So, you wonder whether BF would take off his armor long enough to ... ahem. Well, I know that major parts of the armor are only held in place by strips of velcro. So the codpiece probably comes off quite easily. And that's all he needs to get rid of, I assume. But I'm always willing to try out how long it will actually take ... Bulloch, put that uniform on NOW. We have to conduct a field experiment here.

Kim Pecherski: Welcome to insanity! Oh, you sound tasteless and inventive — just my kind of scum. Put a leash on Lord Vader? That's bondage! And sounds very promising.

Your Barbie goes SW Scenario (in hot pink!) left me with a split side. OUCH! Talk about funny.

And the last thing I need is a Kenobi ornament mind-bending me to buy more SW ornaments. Some of those buggers are expensive, some are hard to come by, and all are hogging much needed space.

And do not feel bad for not being on-line. I only recently entered "planet E-mail" (and then only business-wise, here at the office), and I still prefer the ancient letter-writing method. Call me an outdated fossil — see if I care.

Ming (the Merciless): You have a lot of guts ... (and so on), after what you pulled. How dare you leave your latest edition of BC with "my boy", requesting him to sign it? Not only did he now see that the oil I presented him with in San Fran also graces the cover of a fanzine. Nope, you also gave him the golden opportunity (since you weren't present at the time) to thumb through the volume and notice/see/read the illos and story.

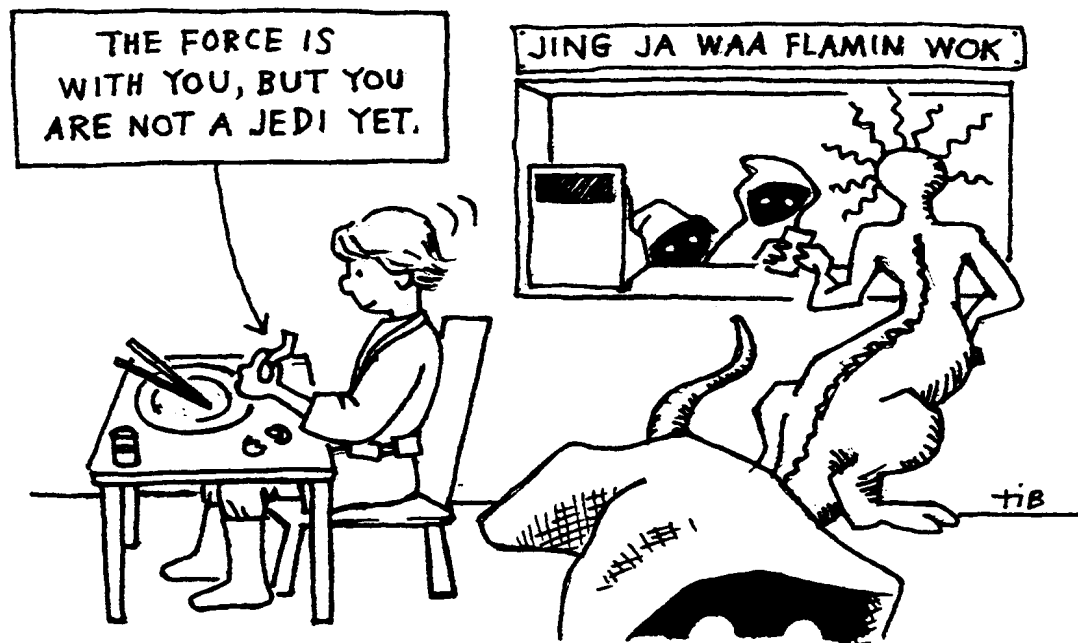
So I made a vow: If the Fett-Meister will no longer

correspond/speak/cuddle with me because of "Lonely Is The Hunter", then I shall arrange a nice trip to HOTH for you, where I will gleefully watch you turn into an icecube!

But you may thank your lucky stars: Returning from my trip to California, I found another 2-page handwritten letter from "Mr. Niceguy". I am now sure that we are still on speaking terms.

But then: it's not December yet. Maybe he's gonna crane my unwashed little neck in front of the entire German SW congregation. Better start praying...

Well, all for now. High time to get back to work. Fly casual, folks — and remember: always let the Wookiee win!



NOW AVAILABLE!

A Tremor in the Force 10

"Babysitter" by Tara Ludmer. Even Han and Leia need a night out away from the kids. Thank the Force for teenage girls who live next door!

"Sands of Time" by Marti Schuller, art by Cheree Cargill. Obi-Wan Kenobi has spent the last 20 years in his hut in the Jundland Wastes, watching over the young boy who is growing to manhood not far away. The time has almost come when his training must begin. But Obi-Wan has grown old and his heart is beginning to fail. Will he have enough time to train the Galaxy's only hope?

"The Other Way Around" by Barbara Gardner. As Luke lay writhing in agony under the Emperor's Force attacks, it was his father who had finally saved him. What if it had happened the other way around?

"By the Turn of a Card" by Catriona Campbell, art by Gerald Crotty. The latest chapter in the *Penumbra* series. Leia, Lando, Chewie and the droids infiltrate Jabba's palace to rescue Han. But in this universe, Luke isn't there to lend his Jedi powers and Han must learn the horrible news of Luke's fall to the Dark.

"Best Friends" by MJ Mink, art by Dani. Luke Skywalker had grown up with Biggs and Tarrant Darklighter, sharing the usual love-hate relationship of many teenage boys. Then Biggs had gone off to the Academy and something changed between Luke and Tarrant that neither could pinpoint. Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that the Darklighters had always been Protectors of the Jedi ... and Luke was the last Jedi.

"Ca Ta" by Marti Schuller, art by Z. P. Florian. When Luke sees a strange little alien about to be run down by speeding cyclists, his instinctive reaction is to save her. But afterwards he is startled and chagrined to discover that his act of selflessness has won him a personal bodyguard, the grateful Mij who must now fulfill "ca-ta" by protecting her savior for the rest of his life — or commit suicide in disgrace.

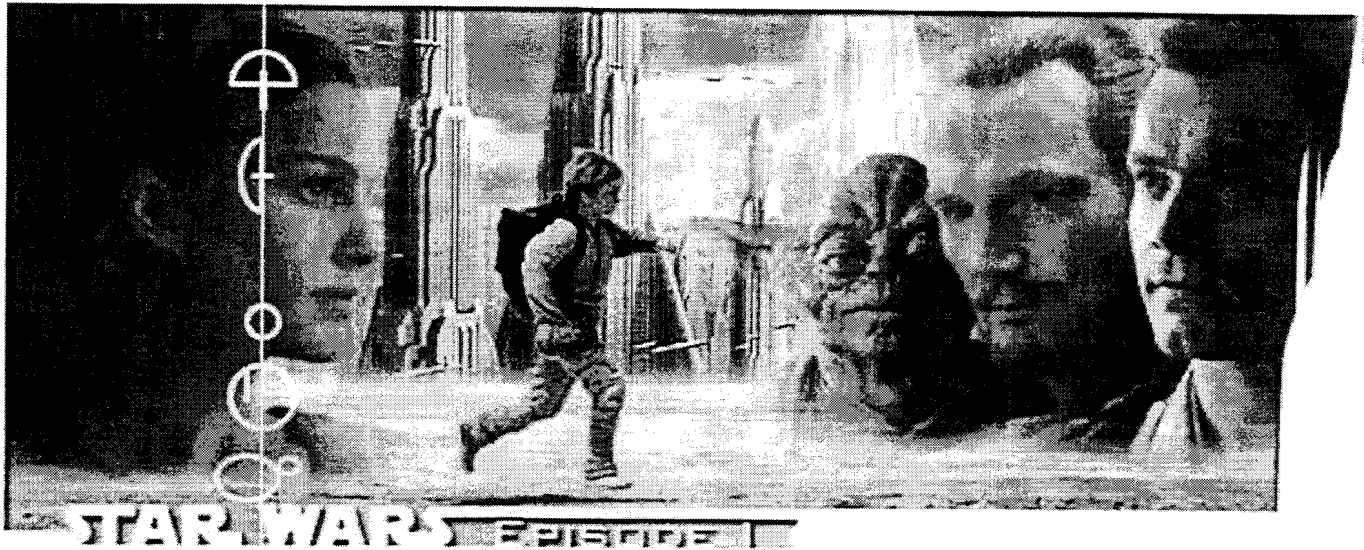
"To Serve With Love" by Martie Benedict O'Brien, art by Nicola Pearce. Leia was weary beyond words, weary of war and duty, of being a symbol and soldier. And yet there was no way she could abandon the cause she had fought so long and hard for. Was there any place — any way — that she and Han would ever be able to find a peaceful, happy existence? Luke had an idea, a desperate, half-crazy idea to help them ... and it just might work.

"The Candle" by Z. P. Florian. Luke has established the Jedi Academy and Leia assigns him an assistant from her staff, a skittish young woman named Joli Wheatgrower. At first nervous around the handsome young Jedi, she grows to love him and their relationship becomes one of devotion and commitment. But there are others who love Luke just as much and are as committed to helping him in his task.

"Act of Faith" by Veronica Wilson, art by Gerald Crotty. The sequel to "Balance of Power" in TF#8. The unthinkable has happened — an Imperial royal guard has made an assassination attempt on the Emperor and Darth Vader in the depths of the Imperial palace. Conditioned for absolute loyalty, the only explanation is that the guard has been tampered with to commit the heinous crime. Vader begins the investigation with a vengeance and what he discovers will shake the foundation of the Imperial government.

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coming soon to a galaxy near you

A TREMOR IN THE FORCE #11. NOTICE... Due to career and health considerations, I have cancelled the next issue of TF until (hopefully) sometime next year. By the time the new movie opens, I hope to be able to pick up again and do another issue. Thanks for all your support and especially to the contributors who are the heart and soul of TF. Meantime, watch for some special publications from Falcon Press coming for MediaWest next year. Cheree Cargill, 114 Villanova Circle, Forney, TX 75126 USA.

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THE RETURN OF THE REST OF THE GARBAGE. The next issue will appear in 1999. Contributions are accepted in theory up to October 1998, although if the zine is full, it will close earlier. Straight or slash both welcome, but sex is not mandatory in the stories. Z. P. Florian, 6214 Waterway, Falls Church, VA 22044. Contributions may be e-mailed to me at ZPFlo@AOL.com (ASCII or WordPerfect please).

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SMELL #4. Yes, the insanity continues. For more information, SASE Judith Yuenger, 13491 S. Silverleaf Rd., Plainfield, IL 60544.

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Thanks to Debbie Kittle, Tim Blaes, Gerald Crotty, and all the others who sent clippings. We'll try to print more in the next issue...



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